

The image of the future profession among psychology students at the initial stage of professional training

K. A. Volodina

Tyumen State University,
6, ul. Volodarskogo, Tyumen, 625003, Russian Federation

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The article deals with issues of studying and shaping the image of a future profession as conceived by psychology students at first stages of their professional training in higher education institutions. The topicality of the research lies in the necessity to design a model for building the future profession's image in this group of students. Such a model should advance knowledge of the occupation being obtained and of the future professional activities. The research objective was the theoretical and empirical substantiation of the model for shaping the image of a future profession among psychology students at the initial stage of vocational training at a university. The study suggests that the structure of image of the future profession consists of three parts: motivational, cognitive, and emotional. These components are interconnected, building an integrated whole, which was confirmed by correlation and factor analyses. Five types of the image of future profession were identified in psychology students. At the stage of the ascertaining experiment of the study, the following distribution of the sample according to the types of image of the future profession was revealed: "Non-professional" and "Professional marginal" — 33 %, "Professionally Knowledgeable" — 48 %, "Pre-professional" and "Professional" — 19 %. The study proved that the formation of the image of the future profession among psychology students at the initial stage of professional training can be facilitated by the introduction of a comprehensive program. The results of the study will be useful to universities in shaping the image of the future profession of first-year students.

Keywords: image of profession, psychologist, types image of profession, university students.

Introduction

The level of contemporary society development, innovative technologies, use of practical psychology in every social sphere — all these introduce new demands to a psychologist's professional training. Our society is in need of psychology experts who are professionally competent and society-focused, for nowadays there are so many problems that are possible to settle only with a help of a knowledgeable psychologist. So, the modern professional training in higher education institutions should aim not only at imparting certain vocational knowledge and skills, but also at building a detailed image of future occupation. As practice shows many students become disillusioned with their choice of future profession. It happens because of the fact that, at the entrance to higher education institutions, the ideal conceptions students have about their prospective vocation are not in compliance with the real work conditions and challenges the students face in the course

of study. Some students have no clear conceptions about their professional activities, and this explains the difficulties they have during their vocational training. A well-shaped image of future profession in a freshman or sophomore lets them logically map the ways to learn their occupation at the subsequent stages of education.

The topicality of the current research lies in the necessity to design a model building future profession's image in psychology students at first stages of their professional training in higher education institutions. This model should be elaborated to meet the following objectives: boost the level of knowledge of the occupation being obtained and future professional activities; generate conceptions about prospective vocation and ensure positive attitude thereto; and enhance motivation in students for further professional growth and perfection.

The emphasis on the professional training of qualified psychologists can be traced in the studies of foreign and domestic psychologists (Ansimova et al., 2019; Litvinenko, 2014; Wang et al., 2011). Especially important is the theoretical training of a psychologist and the possibility of applying this knowledge in psychological practice (Gaj, 2021; Legrenziet al., 2017). Scientists pay attention to the image of the profession (Bolliger, Yurkova, 2014; Vasileva, Gracheva, 2015; Zritneva, Platash, 2010) and the image of the professional (Bozadzhiev, 2008; Chernikov, 2017; McDonald et al., 2014; Schneider, 2001).

The literature studied shows that there is no uniform understanding of the term "image of the profession". Some of the works deem the image of profession a system consisting of complementary components (Klimov, 1995; Zritneva, Platash, 2010). There are investigations that treat it as a construct formed in the process of professional emergence and development (Dyachkin, 2009; Ziborova, 1999; Rybnikova, 2008). A. Sosnovskaya deems the image of profession to be person's knowledge and attitudes to their vocation (Sosnovskaya, 2005). D. Lyubenko regards it as an aggregate of assessments of probable results of labour activities (Lyubenko, 2003).

Some researchers show interest in the process of image of profession shaping at different stages of professional becoming (Kubyshko et al., 2018; Tolochek, Denysova, 2013): at the stage of professional identity (Krivtsova, 2017), at the opening stage of professional education (Denisova et al., 2017), at the finishing stage of professional education (Belykh, 2016); they single out the factors and means influencing the process of its becoming (Guseva, 2017; Fadeyeva, 2016).

The image of the future profession as conceived by psychology students is an understudied field and there are few publications both in Russian and international journals on this topic. The current article is a complete description of the research the author conducted; there are previous articles (Volodina, Kolmogorceva, 2014) presenting each a certain stage of the experiment while the present work is a full account of the author's investigation.

The analysis of scientific literature on theoretical and practical issues of profession's image shaping revealed several conflicts:

- *at the social-psychological level* — between the students' ideas of psychologist's occupation and the real demands placed on the activities of a psychologist in various spheres of society;
- *at the scientific and theoretical level* — between the need to form an image of a future profession among students and the insufficient representation in psychology of theoretical grounds for developing programs and technologies for forming an image of a future profession among university students;

- *at the methodological scientific level* — between the aforementioned need and an insufficient methodological support for building the image.

The urge to negotiate these conflicts lets define the research problem in several planes. In theory, we need to define the term “the image of future profession” and develop its structure for psychology students. In practice, we need to design and implement a model that can shape the image of future profession in psychology students at the opening stages of their professional training in higher education institutions.

According to the results of theoretical analysis, it should be noted that the concept of “image of the profession” does not have a single definition. E. Klimov, V. Tolochek, V. G. Denysova, and others define the concept of “image of a profession” through the image of the object and subject of labor, through the image as a regulator of labor activity (Klimov, 1995; Tolochek, Denysova, 2013). In the studies of O. Dyachkin and M. Rybnikova, the image of the profession is a construct that is formed in the process of professional formation and development (Dyachkin, 2009; Rybnikova, 2008). A. Sosnovskaya considers the image of the profession as a representation of a person about his profession (Sosnovskaya, 2005).

In the course of the study, the concept of “image of a profession” was clarified and specified. The image of the profession is a holistic, multi-level system of subjective representations of a person about a profession, reflecting the emotional attitude of a person in the profession, as well as his motivational potential for further professional development and improvement.

Researchers often in the structure of the image of the profession distinguish such components as the image of the object and the image of Ego (Klimov, 1995; Durmanova, 2006; Rybnikova, 2008). In studies, the components of the image of the profession are rarely represented: cognitive, creative, social personality-oriented.

Based on the theoretical analysis, the following components were identified in the structure of the image of a future profession: motivational — comprises the level of awareness of choice of occupation, its role in the society, the need for professional advancement, development and personal growth; the cognitive — presupposes mastery of knowledge of the chosen vacation, of professional activities, of a highly qualified psychologist, of professionally important qualities of the specialist; the emotional — includes an emotional attitude toward the occupation being obtained and toward future professional activities. The above components — elements of a system — are independent in their development, but in real functioning they are interconnected and form the integrity structure of the image of future profession.

Methods

The research aims at theoretical and empirical substantiation of the model of future profession image shaping in psychology students at the opening stage of their higher education.

The study was conducted and implemented in four stages:

1. *The first stage* — a theoretical analysis of the scientific literature on the problem of the image of the profession and the possibility of forming this image among students. Psychodiagnostic tools was picked up.

2. *The second stage* is to conduct a trial study to determine the direction, principles of organization and methods of the main study. As a result of studying the structural

content of the image of a future profession among psychology students, its indicators were determined. A model of formation of the image of the future profession among students-psychologists at the initial stage of professional training in the university was created. Based on the model, the training program "I am a Future Psychologist" was developed.

3. *The third stage* is the implementation of a model for shaping the image of a future profession among psychology students at the initial stage of professional training at a university. The training program "I am a Future Psychologist" was introduced. A formative experiment was conducted.

4. *The fourth stage* — the analysis of the efficiency of the model of formation of the image of the future profession in students-psychologists at the initial stage of professional training in the university was carried out.

In ascertaining experiment as the population took part 202 students of first and second courses. The age of the study participants is in the range from 17 to 19 years, the average age is 18 years.

The study was based on the Omsk State Pedagogical University and the Shadrinsk State Pedagogical Institute.

The psychodiagnostic tools include:

5. Diagnostics of motivational factors of professional work of employees (S. Ritchie, P. Martin). The methodology allows to identify motivation factors that are highly valued by respondents, as well as factors to which they attach little importance as potential sources of satisfaction of the activities performed.

6. Questionnaire to study the leading motives of the psychologist (G. Pomaz). The questionnaire allows you to determine the manifestation of various motives of the psychologist: "true professional", "unprofessional" and "false professional".

7. Test "Satisfaction with the chosen profession" (A. Rean, modification of V. Yadov, N. Kuzmina). The test is aimed at self-knowledge of student satisfaction with the chosen profession as a psychologist based on the calculation of the satisfaction index.

8. Questionnaire of life values (N. Senin). The questionnaire allows you to evaluate the full manifestation of life goals: personal prestige, high financial standing, creativity, active social contacts, self-development, achievements, spiritual satisfaction, preservation of one's own individuality.

9. Mini-test for eliciting professional positions of psychology students (L. Schneider). A mini-test allows you to determine the manifestation of the parameters of a professional position in students.

10. Questionnaire of professionally significant qualities.

The questionnaire is aimed at identifying knowledge about the professional qualities of a specialist that are necessary for the successful implementation of professional activities.

The study used the following methods of mathematical statistic: the Kolmogorov — Smirnov test, Pearson's Correlation Coefficient, Factor analysis, Student's t-test.

Based on the analysis of the problem under study about the formation of the image of the future profession, the following hypotheses were put forward:

1. The image of the profession is a holistic, multi-level system of subjective representations of a person about the profession, the structure of the image of the future profession among psychology students may include motivational, cognitive, emotional components.

2. The manifestation of the image of the future profession can be represented in the form of levels.

3. The formation of the image of the future profession among psychological students can be facilitated by the introduction of a developed model on the formation of the image of the future profession.

Using a complex of psychodiagnostic methods, as a result of a stating experiment, the structure of the image of the future profession among psychology students. 18 students of the experimental group and 18 students of the control group participated in the formative experiment. The experimental and control groups consisted of students with unclear ideas about the future profession. To form the image of the future profession, a model was developed for the formation of the image of the future profession among psychology students at the initial stage of professional training at the university.

The model included blocks: diagnostic (Determine the type of image of the future profession), motivational (The necessity of forming the image of a profession for students at the initial stage of professional training at a university is determined), indicative (Implementation of the training program “I am a Future Psychologist” in work with students of the experimental group), constructive forming (Development, change and improvement of the components of the image of a future profession among psychology students), generalizing (Generalization and systematization of students “knowledge of the profession, the manifestation of students” subjective ideas about the profession).

Results

During the study, on the basis of theoretical analysis and psychodiagnostic methods, it was suggested that *the cognitive component* of the image structure of a future profession may contain: knowledge of Activities of Practical Psychologist; knowledge of motivation and behavior of people; knowledge of the functional duties and rights of a Practical Psychologist; awareness of yourself as a future Psychologist; knowledge of professionally important qualities of psychologist.

The emotional component includes: an attitude towards education; emotional attitude toward role of psychologist in future; pleasure of helping other people; attitude toward a future profession.

The motivational component includes: need for improvement, growth and development as a personality; need for self-development; professional sphere of life; professional motives; need to be creative; need for a feeling of demand for interesting socially useful work; active communications; need for other people to gain recognition.

To prove the normal distribution of each indicator was used the Kolmogorov — Smirnov test. It was found that the experimental data were normally distributed (the normality criterion showed $p > 0.05$; the arithmetic mean, median and mode coincide with the ± 1 assumption; uttermost manifestations and asymmetry are in the range from $-1,000$ to $+1,000$). The data indicate that you can apply the method of correlation and factor analysis in the study.

Correlation analysis was performed to identify the links between indicators of possible components of the image of the profession structure. 32 statistically significant connection found.

In order to ascertain the structure of future profession's image held by psychology students and to reveal any consistencies between its items, the Factor analysis was applied

(see Table 1). Principal components factor analysis with further varimax rotation, and further identify factors. Factors with eigenvalues less than 1 were excluded. Factor analysis was applied for 17 variables (a list of indicators was presented earlier).

Table 1. Factor matrix

Indicators	Factor loading		
	1	2	3
Factor 1:			
Attitude toward education	0.75	0.20	0.18
Emotional attitude toward role of psychologist in future	0.73	0.05	0.24
Pleasure of helping other people	0.55	0.37	0.11
Attitude toward future profession	0.51	-0.01	-0.19
Factor 2:			
Knowledge of activities of practical psychologist	0.06	0.77	0.16
Awareness of yourself as a future psychologist	-0.13	0.66	0.05
Knowledge of professionally important qualities of psychologist	0.10	0.50	0.17
Factor 3:			
The need for self-development	-0.02	0.01	0.78
Professional sphere of life	0.16	-0.20	0.71
The need to be creative	0.17	0.13	0.55
Professional motives	-0.35	0.15	0.50

From table 1 it is seen that there are 11 indicators that made up three factors, the eigenvalue of which is more than 1. The sum of the contributions to the total dispersion of the first three factors is 76.99%, which exceeds 75%. The first factor was 43.9% total dispersion. The core of this factor is the parameter — attitude towards education (0.75), this load is maximum. An analysis of the indicators included in the first factor made it possible to call it the emotional aspect of professional representations of psychology students.

The second factor was 23.9% total dispersion. The core of this factor is the parameter — knowledge of activities of practical psychologist (0.77), this load is maximum. The description of this factor corresponds to the cognitive aspect of professional representations of student psychologists.

The third factor was 9.119% total variance. The core of this factor is the parameter — the need for self-development, since its maximum load on this factor is 0.78. Based on the indicators that make up the third factor, it is called the motivational aspect of professional representations of psychology students.

The results of factor analysis allowed to determine and specify the indicators of the components of the structure of the image of the future profession among psychology students. The first hypothesis of the study was confirmed.

At the stage of the ascertaining experiment, it was possible to verify the assumptions about the types of images of future professions among psychology students. Based on the work of scientists G. Saganenko and V. Yadov, who have proved that the correctness and accuracy of measurement can be increased by calculating the relative measurement error, it allows to compare the correctness of measurements on two or more scales of different sensitivity and stability of the scale (Saganenko, 1994, Yadov, 1995). As a result, the seven-membered, five-membered, and three-membered scales were tested for sensitivity. The five-membered scale was almost three times more sensitive than the rest of the scales. Thus, it was possible to prove the correctness of the allocation of five types of image of profession with different level of manifestation.

The empirical indicators of each component were modified in quantitative equivalents with the help of number system as follows: 1 — low level; 2 — below average; 3 — average; 4 — above average; 5 — a high level. The obtained data led to developing an evaluation mechanism allowing to estimate the image's maturity level. The total score for the studied items ranges from 11 to 55 points: low level — 11 to 19 points, below average — 20 to 28, average — 29 to 38, above average — 39 to 47, high level — 48 to 55. To determine the type of image of a profession, only those indicators that were highlighted in factor analysis were taken into account.

In the process of qualitative description of future profession's image maturity, each level was given its own name: low is the "Non-Professional" type, below average is the "Professional Marginal" type, medium is the "Professionally Knowledgeable" type, above average is the "Pre-Professional" type, and high is the "Professional" type. Each type of the image of the future profession includes the previously considered indicators that determine its structure, these indicators have a different degree of severity. The second hypothesis of the study has been proven.

Manifestations of image types of the future profession were distributed as follows: "Professionally Knowledgeable" (average level) amounted to 122 (48%) people, "Professional Marginal" (below average level) — 75 (30%), "Pre-Professional" (above average level) — 42 (17%), "Non-Professional" (low level) — 8 (3%) and "Professional" (high level) — 5 (2%).

Based on the stated problems, a model was developed for shaping the image of the future profession among psychology students at the initial stage of professional training at a university.

As previously reported, the developed model served as the basis and guidance for the creation of the training program "I am a Future Psychologist". The main goal of the program was to increase the severity of the indicators of the image of the future profession among psychology students at the initial stage of professional training at the university.

The course "I am a Future Psychologist" is designed for 30 academic hours, 2 or 3 sessions a week (3 hours long) and consists of four modules: "Psychology as a Profession", "The Model of Psychology Specialist", "Peculiarities of Psychologist's Professional Activities" and "Ways of Professional Development". Every module introduces contents of all components of the future profession's image in question (motivational, cognitive, emotional). The course employs the following techniques of influence: art therapy, elements of play therapy, psychological drama, psychological gymnastics (Volodina, 2014).

Successful building and shaping of the future profession's image in psychology students beginning their professional education depended on implementation of each module of the course, with each module containing its own goals, objectives and contents.

Table 2. Comparative analysis of mean values of future profession image maturity in psychology students

Indicators	Experimental group			Control group		
	ascert. stage	test stage	Student's t-test	ascert. stage	test stage	Student's t-test
Motivational component						
Professional sphere of life	58.22	62	-2.399*	56.33	55.72	0.408
Need for self-development	32.94	37.94	-3.054**	35.27	34.725	0.342
Professional motives	7.17	8.94	-2.406*	6.88	7.11	-0.544
The need to be creative	27.39	34.44	-2.576*	26.5	28.11	-0.856
Cognitive component						
Awareness of yourself as a future psychologist	5.83	7.56	-2.776**	5.61	5.06	0.990
Knowledge of activities of practical psychologist	6.39	7.72	-3.298**	5.22	5.17	0.089
Knowledge of professionally important qualities of psychologist	0.239	0.313	-0.532	0.184	0.213	-1.314
Emotional component						
Attitude toward education	7.22	8.83	-2.743**	7.3	7.17	0.300
Emotional attitude toward role of psychologist in future	6.78	8.50	-3.256**	6.61	7.22	-0.779
Pleasure of helping other people	7.56	8.83	-2.895**	8	7.28	1.365
Attitude toward future profession	3.72	4.58	-3.196**	3.6	3.94	-1.232

Note. Statistical significance in Student's t-test: * $p \leq 0.05$; ** $p \leq 0.01$.

Implementation of the model resulted in an increase in the future profession's image maturity, added solidity to the students' ideas and perceptions of the occupation and future professional activities, ensured positive emotional attitude to the vocation, and led to improved motivational potential to further their professional development and perfection.

The sample size at the stage of the forming experiment was 36 psychology students (experimental and control groups). In each group, an equal percentage of types of manifestations of the image of the profession were observed. To prove the uniformity of the sample, Student t-test was used.

The efficiency of the training course "I am a Future Psychologist" was assessed at the test experiment stage, wherein the same diagnostic toolkit as in the ascertaining experiment was used. Using the Student's t-test, a comparative analysis of the dynamics of group

indicators of the image of the future profession in psychology students of experimental and control groups was carried out (see Table 2).

The present study results show that there are significant changes in the majority of indices of the image of future profession in the experiment group; the most drastic changes were observed in the following parameters: the need for self-development, the professional sphere of life, the need to be creative, the knowledge of the activities of a practical psychologist and awareness of yourself as a future psychologist, attitude toward a future profession, pleasure from helping other people and attitude to the education received. In the control group, there are no significant differences in these indicators.

Students of the experimental group have no significant differences in terms of the indicator — knowledge about the professionally significant qualities of a specialist. There are changes in this indicator, but they are not significant, there is an assumption that during the study this indicator had rather high scores, therefore, there were no significant changes, as a result of the forming experiment, this indicator retained its high positions.

It is worth pointing out that after the teaching experiment, the experiment group showed significant changes in distribution of the students over the future profession's image maturity levels. The two lowest levels ("Non-Professional" and "Professional Marginal") are outgrown and not present in the chart. The amount of students characterised as "Professionally Knowledgeable" went down to 22 %. The next level — "Pre-Professional" — grew to 56 %. 22 % of students are at the highest "Professional" level. The students of the control group did not show any significant changes in the level of future profession's image maturity.

Thus, the analysis of the obtained data showed that as a result of the implementation of the model on formation of the image of the future profession among psychology students at the initial stage of professional training in the university, there were significant changes in the components of the image of the future profession, which confirms the third hypothesis of the study.

Conclusions

The initial stage of study at the university is the most important for the formation of the image of the future profession among students. The formed image of the profession gives a more accurate idea of the profession and the role of a professional in the future, determines the ways of professional development and formation. In the course of our research, it was possible to specify the concept of the image of the profession, which made it possible to expand the idea of this phenomenon.

The structure of the image of the future profession among psychology students is represented by three components: the motivational component (the motivational potential of professional development and improvement), the cognitive component (the student's subjective ideas about the profession) and the emotional component (the student's emotional attitude to the chosen profession).

Empirically, it was proved about the different degree of manifestation of the image of the future profession among psychology students. Types of the image of the future profession among psychology students were identified: "*Non-Professional*" — this type is characterized by the unformed image of the future profession, which manifests itself in disappointment in the chosen profession, passivity, unwillingness to study in the chosen

specialty. “*Professional Marginal*” — this type is characterized by a certain lack of formation of the image of the future profession, which manifests itself in the weak expression of the sphere of professional life, the desire for development and self-improvement both as a person and as a professional. “*Professionally Knowledgeable*” — this type is characterized by the fact that the professional sphere occupies a priority position, despite the weakly expressed desires to change oneself, improve oneself, change, and develop professionally. “*Pre-Professional*” — this type is characterized by a pronounced formation of the image of the future profession among students: the professional sphere is the main content of students’ lives; formed ideas about the role of a psychologist, about a future professional; application of a creative approach in the process of studying at a university. “*Professional*” — this type is characterized by a high level of expression of the professional sphere among students, which is reflected in the desire for the most complete realization of their abilities in their future professional activities, the use of elements of creativity in their activities, the desire to develop and improve as a professional. The study showed that the majority of students are dominated by “Professionally Knowledgeable” — 122 (48 %) people.

Based on the results of the study, a model was created for building and shaping the image of the future profession among psychology students. This model formed the basis of the training course “I am a future psychologist”, designed to clarify the subjective ideas of psychology students about the profession they are acquiring, to form their awareness and acceptance of it, and to activate their motivational potential.

When comparing the experimental and control groups, changes were revealed in the students of the control group: there are no types of “Non-Professional” and “Professional Marginal”, the severity of the “Professionally Knowledgeable” level decreased to 22 %, the severity of the “Pre-professional” type increased by 56 %, in 22 % expressed “Professional” type. There were no significant changes in the control group.

The practical significance of the study is determined by the fact that the results obtained will be useful in shaping the image of the future profession among first-year students, both when interacting with them, and in developing special programs and courses to improve the image of the future profession at the initial stages of education at the university.

The study on the formation of the image of the future profession among student psychologists at the initial stage of professional training at the university opens up new prospects: in the study of factors and conditions for the formation of the image of the profession of a psychologist; in the study of psychological determinants of the formation of the image of a future profession in students; in the study of gender characteristics in psychology students in the formation of the image of a future profession.

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Author's information:

Ksenia A. Volodina — PhD in Psychology; kse8727@mail.ru

Образ будущей профессии у студентов-психологов на начальном этапе профессиональной подготовки

К. А. Володина

Тюменский государственный университет,
Российская Федерация, 625003, Тюмень, ул. Володарского, 6

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Статья посвящена проблемам изучения и формирования образа будущей профессии у студентов-психологов на начальном этапе профессиональной подготовки в вузе. Актуальность исследования обусловлена необходимостью создания модели формирования образа будущей профессии у студентов-психологов на начальном этапе профессиональной подготовки в вузе с целью повышения уровня знаний о получаемой профессии и профессиональной деятельности, формирования субъективных представлений о будущей профессии и положительного отношения к ней, а также активизации мотивационного потенциала студентов для их дальнейшего профессионального развития и совершенствования. Целью исследования выступило теоретическое и эмпирическое обоснование модели формирования образа будущей профессии у студентов-психологов на начальном этапе профессиональной подготовки в вузе. В ходе исследования было доказано, что структура образа будущей профессии состоит из трех составляющих: мотивационной, когнитивной и эмоциональной. Эти компоненты взаимосвязаны, образуют единое целое, что было подтверждено корреляционным и факторным анализом. Выделены типы образа будущей профессии у студентов-психологов: «Непрофессиональный», «Профессиональный маргинал», «Профессионально-ознакомленный», «Допрофессиональный», «Профессиональный». На этапе констатирующего эксперимента исследования было выявлено следующее распределение выборки по типам образа будущей профессии: «Непрофессиональный» и «Профессиональный маргинал» — 33%, «Профессионально-ознакомленный» — 48%, «Допрофессиональный» и «Профессиональный» — 19%. В ходе исследования доказано, что формированию образа будущей профессии у студентов-психологов на начальном этапе профессиональной подготовки может способствовать разработка теоретической модели, соответствующей практике, и внедрение построенной на ее основе комплексной программы, направленной на совершенствование субъективных представлений у студентов-психологов о получаемой профессии, осознание и принятие ее, актуализацию мотивационного потенциала. Полученные результаты исследования будут полезны вузам при формировании образа

будущей профессии первокурсников как при взаимодействии с ними, так и при разработке специальных программ и курсов для улучшения и совершенствования образа их будущей профессии.

Ключевые слова: образ профессии, профессия психолога, типы образа профессии, студенты вуза.

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Контактная информация:

Володина Ксения Андреевна — канд. психол. наук; kse8727@mail.ru