

## UNIVERSITY STUDENT'S IMAGE: FEATURES OF FORMATION AND DEVELOPMENT

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**Abstract:** The article deals with the problem of the image of the student in Higher Education Institutions. Future experts were invited to express their opinion on the image of the modern student by answering the questionnaire "Student image," developed by the authors of the article. The conducted research made it possible to clarify the student youth's views on the student's positive and negative image, so further research will be aimed at developing and implementing recommendations for forming a positive image of the student in a Higher Education Institution.

**Keywords:** Appearance of a student, Institution of higher education, Negative image, Positive image, Student's image.

### 1 Introduction

At the stage of reforming all educational units in Ukraine, the problem of forming the image of the student of a Higher Education Institution (HEI) is actualized, which causes the activation of various self-processes: self-reflection, self-development, self-improvement, self-realization [22], which serve as a basis for the effective functioning of the future specialist in multiple spheres of social activity, educational and professional in particular.

The image of student youth is a problem that has recently attracted considerable interest from domestic and foreign researchers. To a large extent, this is due to the fact that the student's age is a sensitive period for developing intellectual and physical forces, the growth of creative opportunities, and the flourishing of external attractiveness. But unfortunately, this age period conceals the illusion that intellectual and physical dreaming will always accompany a person and that success can be achieved through beauty and youth without much effort. That is why young people should be motivated to create a positive image, because this phenomenon contains not only the external side, which is based on visual attractiveness, physical perfection, healthy appearance, and good manners but its essence, which is the inner world of personality – mentality, moral qualities, volitional characteristics, general culture, professional competence, etc.

The *purpose* of our research is to reveal an understanding of the essence of the image by representatives of universities from different industries (the survey covered future agrarians, economists, educators, and physicians), which allowed us not only to get acquainted with the views of future specialists of different specialties but also to identify common features in these views which create a positive and negative personality image and analyze the attitude to the image by students themselves.

### 2 Literature Review

In the scientific works of domestic and foreign researchers, problems have been raised that form the basis for creating the image of students of Higher Education Institution: professional competence, social and professional maturity, professional self-development, professional mobility, professional ethics, etc.

Radul considers the characteristic of socio-professional maturity of the personality of a person important, which "implies the perception and understanding of oneself, the attitude to oneself

and behavior in the environment, the contemplative image of oneself, the formation of certain signs of personality and specific properties of oneself as a unit of activity, at the same time more or less emotional load, self-esteem and methods of action that become typical in behavior and used in everyday life are revealed" [26, p. 175].

Prima states that the professional mobility of a specialist requires the presence of professionally essential qualities to which he attributes: "individual image, adaptability, independence, communicativeness, prompt thinking, purposefulness, responsibility, critical thinking, ability to self-confidence, self-control, etc." [25, p. 148].

Thus, in the writings of Ukrainian scientists, concerning various aspects of the problem of professional self-development of future specialists, the need to develop in them such personal and professional qualities that would be a prerequisite for the professional success of a young specialist and his demand in the labor market, ensure the competitiveness of young people market economy is indicated.

Scientists consider the image to be a complex personal-professional formation [16, 20, 25]. Under the influence of higher education reform in Ukraine, requirements not only for the quality of higher education and professional training of future professionals are changing, but the image of the student body itself is changing. The generalized image of the student is a part of the image of a particular university, which imprints on the perception of this institution by the public, determines the overall rating of the institution in the higher education system, as well as the participation of its representatives in perspective projects, widens international relations, increases the influx of entrants while providing more opportunity.

Domestic and foreign researchers study the problem of the image of the student of a Higher Education Institution [1, 6, 17, 22]. Thus, Valeeva defines the image of the student as a personal property of the subject, which translates his idea of himself in the totality of visual qualities, behaviors, and internal and external biosocial characteristics in a particular environment of life, provides optimal integration of the learner in society and productive implementation of activities in the chosen field of social practice [30, p. 11].

From the point of view of the researcher, the structure of the student's image integrates natural (physical, psychophysiological, age, gender), socio-behavioral (visual, audio, olfactory, kinesthetic images; individual lifestyle, role-playing, moral, role-playing, role-playing, moral, emotional-willful qualities of a professional) components [ibid].

Zherebrenko considers the image of a professional as the core of the student's image because the student today is a future professional who should represent his basic features already at the stage of professional preparation. In the structure of the image of the experienced researcher, the following components are distinguished: external (visual attractiveness, harmony, demeanor, facial expressions, gestures, timbre and power of voice, suit, gait, etc.), procedural (style of behavior, self-submission, form of communication, professionalism, plasticity) and internal (inner world of the individual, knowledge, ability, understanding of his spiritual and moral and intellectual development, needs, values, etc.) [31, p. 14].

Dovga notes that modern students stay aware of the changes that are taking place in public life. Like most young people, they follow fashion and care for their appearance. In the student environment, the prevailing view is that being fashionable means, first of all, adhering to fashion for clothing and accessories. Therefore, students usually spend considerable money to create their stylish image (buying expensive clothes, luxury perfumes, the latest mobile gadgets, etc.) but need to pay

more attention to the ability to dress appropriately and with taste, develop an individual style, consider fashion trends, and more.

In this regard, the scientist advises drawing students' attention to the social-image function of clothing, which testifies to a person's belonging to a specific profession, income level, and ethnic or regional origin. Clothing creates conditions for self-expression and personification and helps to establish communication with people of a particular circle. Dressing is one of the main rules to look good: it means showing respect for the people around us. Thanks to clothes, a person asserts himself and acquires a certain image in the eyes of the public [12, p. 29].

Podgurskaya focuses on studying the linguistic component of the image of the modern student. The researcher points out that the use of so-called fashion words, which emphasize the present and avant-garde (sometimes even bohemian or elite) of the speaker, and a sign of national and multicultural personality image, are important in shaping the "modernity" of the young man since these words are often borrowed from other languages. They should be a guide for teachers in shaping students' linguistic image [24, p. 350].

Helena Alves and Mario Raposo have proposed a model for reflecting the impact of an image on student satisfaction and loyalty. The model shows that the image is the formation that influences students' satisfaction. Furthermore, the authors emphasize that the influence of image is also relevant concerning student loyalty. In their work, scientists described the specific effects of the image on students' satisfaction and students' loyalty and also the appropriate level of influence [1].

Scholars Nehme Azoury, Lindos Daou, and Charbel El Khoury have focused their attention on the study's goal to investigate the relationships existing between cognitive, affective, and overall university image. Researchers have emphasized that the university's positive image will foster students' interest in successful learning [2].

Rebecca Maymon, Nathan Hall, and Jason Harley emphasized the importance of perception of actual support received concerning stress and well-being among first-year students attending Canadian and U.S. Higher Education Institutions [19].

Studying the scientific sources on this problem we have concluded that there needs to be more explorations to study the student's image (as a factor of future professional success). Therefore, we conducted this study to find out the importance of forming a positive image for students.

### 3 Materials and Methods

We researched the image of a high school teacher and published the results [23]. The student's interest and involvement in the interviewees prompted us to continue our research on the image, so we focused on the student's appearance in the educational process of the Higher Education Institution.

According to the purpose of the research, we designed a questionnaire using Google Forms, which was distributed to students at HEI via online networks. As a result, 263 respondents took part in the survey – students of agricultural and economic branches (58 persons (22.3%), medical branch (78 persons (30%)) and pedagogical branch (124 persons (47.7%)) universities, including 194 bachelors (75.2%) and 64 masters (24.8%), 180 persons (69.2%) are female, 80 persons (30.8%) are male. Google automatically calculated the answers.

The questionnaire included the following questions:

- What is the importance of the student's appearance?
- How important to you is the student's compliance with standards of behavior?
- How do you feel about having visible tattoos on students?
- Do you find it unnecessary for students to use profane language?
- Suggest three traits of a positive image of the student.

- Suggest three traits of a negative image of the student of HEI.
- How does the academic success of students use personal electronic gadgets?
- Is it essential for you to be an active student?
- How important is communication with classmates to you?
- Do you maintain a healthy lifestyle?
- How often do you visit cultural and entertaining events?
- What role does the student have in the university's educational process?
- What languages do a university student need to know?
- What are the modifications (decorations) of your body you are comfortable with: makeup, tattoo, piercing, implants, nail art?

### 4 Results and Discussion

The following answers were offered to the question about the importance of the student's appearance: very important – 65 people (25.1%), important – 154 (59.5%), not important – 40 (15.4%). That is, most respondents recognize the importance of the student's appearance.

All the questioned respondents but five (1.9%) consider the observance of behavior norms very important – 133 respondents (51.2%) and important – 122 (46.9%).

Respondents' attitude to the presence of visible tattoos on future specialists was distributed as follows: 129 people (49.6%) said that they did not care, 51 people (19.6%) had a positive attitude to visible tattoos, and 80 people (30.8 %) had a negative attitude.

The overwhelming majority of respondents (155 people (59.6%)) said they were discouraged by the use of obscene language used by students. However, 63 people (24.2%) did not care, and 42 people (16.2%) were confused by this fact.

According to the answers of 197 respondents (77.6%), the use of electronic gadgets by students during the educational process has a positive effect on academic performance. The negative impact of gadgets is seen by 28 people (11%), and 29 people (11.4%) believe that the use of these devices does not affect academic performance.

Respondents answered concerning the importance of being an active student as follows: very important – 66 people (26%); important – 159 people (62.6%); not important – 29 people (11.4%).

The positive fact is that most respondents (very important – 103 people (40.4%)) and importantly – 139 people (54.5%) noted the importance of communicating with classmates. Only 13 people (5.1%) indicated that communication with classmates was not important for them.

The negative fact is that the overwhelming majority of the interviewed future professionals sometimes adhere (157 people (61.4%)), and 17 people (6.6%) do not adhere to a healthy lifestyle at all. And only 82 people (32%) always adhere to a healthy lifestyle.

51 (19.9%) of the interviewed persons visit cultural and entertaining events frequently, and most do it from time to time – 190 (74.2%) and 15 (5.9%) do not do it at all.

159 (62.1%) of respondents believe that a student should take the initiative in the educational process. However, 93 (36.3%) persons think it is necessary to take a vital part, and 4 (1.6%) persons believe it is sufficient to be a passive observer in the educational process.

The question "What languages should a university student know?" received the following answers: mother tongue – 14 (5.4%), mother tongue (required) and one foreign language – 171 (66.5%), mother tongue and a few foreign languages – 69 (26.9%) respondents, and 3 people have their own opinion (1.2%).

Respondents are calm about body modifications, such as makeup, tattooing, piercing, and nail art, except for implants. It is worth noting that students found it difficult to answer individual questions, so they still need to answer them.

Respondents' answers regarding *positive* image traits illustrate the considerable diversity of opinions, which confirms the diverse and integrated character of the student's HEI image. However, almost all respondents put neatness (neat and clean hair, good appearance, neatness, cleanliness, good hairstyle, calm makeup, and slight decorations) first.

The next preference is given to *education* (politeness, restraint, elegance, tolerance, patience, humanity, humility, modesty, honesty, kindness, respect for the elders, humility, kindness, honesty, patience). Last but not least, respondents have a positive attitude to student *responsibility* (personality activity, motivation, initiative, perseverance, independence, punctuality, diligence, thirst for knowledge, and determination). *Discipline* (diligence, dedication, confidence, hard work, continuous training, curiosity, perseverance, diligence punctuality) is also one of the positive image traits.

Respondents also focused on *communication skills* (mutual understanding, good conversation style, good sense of humor, cheerfulness, friendliness, good speech, and tolerance). Some of the future experts suggested the following features: creativity, initiative, creativity, ambition, and confidence.

Generalization of the answers received led to the separation of aspects of activity and behavior of the student of HEI, which form a *negative* image: the use of obscene vocabulary, the presence of bad habits, negligence, indifference to learning, aggressiveness, apathy, hypocrisy, irresponsibility, self-responsibility, self-esteem, dysfunctionality, ignoring the rules of conduct during the educational process, delay, violation of etiquette, vulgarity, negative attitude towards teachers, outward attitude towards others, absent-mindedness, insidiousness, irrepressibility, dishonesty, audacity, indifference, inadequacy, incompatibility, indifference, tattoos, or their significant number.

Researchers Pak and Yablonsky argue that students should be motivated to create a positive image, and this process is due to the following factors: knowledge of employers' requirements for graduate school and students' awareness of the need to form a positive image as a component of success; formation of motivation of the graduate for development of self-image skills taking into account high standards of the profession and various spheres of reality; manifestation of the subjective position of the student when working on his image, and self-improvement; correction by young people of ways of behavior, self-esteem, social status, methods of communication (professional, business, interpersonal) concerning others based on timely self-diagnosis and reflection [21, p. 171].

Dovha connects the need to create a positive image of the student with social expectations, which are understood as the norms and requirements of the social environment which confront a person at a particular stage of life and aim at developing the necessary social roles. Social expectations include:

- A person's awareness of what forms of behavior others expect from him;
- Anticipation of possible reactions of others to his behavior;
- Acceptance by a person of the requirements imposed on him about social status.

Social expectations are essential for personality self-regulation [13, p. 408].

During the student period, there is an active development of moral and aesthetic feelings, formation and stabilization of character, and, most importantly, mastering an adult's full range of social roles: civil and professional [8]. Transformation of motivation, the entire system of value orientations, on the one hand, and intensive formation of exceptional abilities in

connection with professionalization, on the other, distinguish this age as the central period of the formation of character and intelligence. Studying at a university is an activity during which a huge mental and neuro-emotional load falls on the student, so it is crucial to forming the ability to manage the mental state in the process of cognitive activity (minimizing emotional arousal in anticipation of the exam or during it, emotional disposition for success, confidence in their abilities, high efficiency, etc.).

Productive learning activity puts the student in a situation of obtaining a socially significant and culturally valuable product from the beginning of mastering a new activity [15]. In this situation, the student is faced with the objective need to cooperate with the teacher and other students, focusing primarily on the semantics and not only on the operational and technical side of the activity. In a situation of productive joint activity, an optimal zone for realizing the opportunities contained in the cooperation of the teacher with students and related to the upbringing and self-government of the individual arises. Consequently, the formation the development of students is determined by the internal contradictions of the individual, among which are tangible:

- The need for social recognition and limited opportunities for its implementation [5];
- The need for independence and the condescending attitude of adults, particularly parents [10];
- The need for self-understanding, self-identification, insufficient or contradictory information about oneself, and the ability to integrate and rethink this information [29];
- The need for understanding and a sense of loneliness and alienation [7];
- The need for professional self-determination, insufficient opportunities, and motivation in implementing the choice [28].

The psychological development of a student's personality is a dialectical process of resolving contradictions, the external transition into the internal, self-movement, and active work on oneself [4].

Pedagogical assessment significantly contributes to the evaluation of students' judgments [14, 18]. The functions of pedagogical review are conditionally divided into two areas – orienting and stimulating. Combining these areas forms the student's knowledge of himself, encouraging the development of value judgments concerning himself.

Modern psychological and pedagogical research convincingly proves that effective pedagogical interaction is only possible by considering the peculiarities of students' motivational sphere [6, 13, 20]. Behind objectively identical actions of students, there can be completely different reasons; therefore, motivation is of exceptional interest to the teacher as a leading factor in the regulation of personality behavior. Investigating the structural composition of educational activity, the motivation for learning and learning tasks are singled out as the main elements of this structure, which include the goal, learning actions, and conditions for achieving the goal (skills of self-control and self-esteem).

The following factors activate personal development during the student period:

- The new social status of the individual (relative independence, social prestige, and the importance of future professional activity) [9];
- Change in the type of activity (it becomes a unique educational and practical-professional activity) [17];
- New forms of activity provide greater independence and freedom of choice [14];
- Expansion of the social environment, the sphere of contacts, and the circle of significant others [3];

Thus, the socio-cultural environment of an educational institution has a complex impact on the personality, professional

qualities, socio-psychological characteristics, and personal values of students as a whole social group. The life values of students depend on significant events in life and students' understanding (comprehension) of life values. In turn, they are a factor in the success of professional training and change in university studies.

In the learning process, the image of a professional is oriented toward the subjects of the educational process and directs the process of professionalization during the learning period [18]. Therefore, the question of the content of the image of a future specialist in students' minds is an important aspect of monitoring the process and results of professional education and professional development, the basis for predicting professional behavior, and the quality of the professional activity.

## 5 Conclusion

Modern changes, including a robust information environment, require prolonged self-improvement from a person, and especially from a future specialist. The world's rapid development and innovative outlook of the student youth on life prompted us to conduct this survey. For the students of the explored universities, it is extremely important to know the expectations of those people to whom professional services will be provided (in our case – agricultural, economic, medical, and educational branches). After all, in the context of European integration, the international community puts high demands on specialists of any profile, in particular: high level of education, general culture, fluency in foreign languages, etc.

Respondents' answers became for us the basis for the following conclusions. First, the positive image of the high school student covers the following traits, which we have organized into the following groups: education, responsibility, discipline, and communication skills.

Secondly, from the point of view of the respondents who participated in the survey, such qualities as irresponsibility, overconfidence, non-punctuality, ignoring the rules of behavior during the educational process, delay, indifference, and indifference reduce the quality of the educational process. Considering employers' requirements, future professionals should constantly work to create and improve their own positive image.

The prospect of further research lies in developing and implementing recommendations for forming a positive image of students of Higher Education Institutions.

## Acknowledgment

We thank everyone who joined the survey and answered the questionnaire. Your sincere answers have made it possible to analyze the students' current views on the external and internal characteristics of the future specialist, which will further enable us to develop recommendations to create a positive image for the higher education student.

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**Primary Paper Section: A**

**Secondary Paper Section: AM**