

DOI: 10.15838/esc/2014.5.35.16
UDC 316.3, LBC 60.52

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Professional vocation: on the subject of non-economic factors in economic growth



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Abstract. The article substantiates the relevance of sociological analysis of a phenomenon such as professional vocation. Professional vocation is considered a characteristic feature of human potential. The author proposes to study the phenomenon of vocation as part of non-economic factors in economic growth.

Key words: professional vocation, human potential, social well-being, work motivation, innovation development of society.

In the conditions of society's innovative development people pay attention to the importance of human potential, the issues of motivation, incentives of creative and professional activity, the mechanisms forming the spiritual and emotional connection between people and their profession, the strategic goals of profession and social values. The phenomenon of professional vocation is considered as a source of innovation activity motivation and a "point of growth" of human potential.

The phenomenon of professional vocation attracts attention of a wide range of specialists.

This phenomenon reflects spiritual connection between people and their profession and is associated with a high level of commitment and dedication, selflessness and creative attitude to work.

The phenomenon of professional vocation and its role in ensuring economic growth is interesting due to the following reasons.

First, the sociological study of the economic growth factors is based on the fact that modernization is a process, first initiated and directed by human activity.

Second, modernization should be considered as a creative process. N. Luhmann focuses on the non-obvious measures implemented during the modernization and the risks of the functional systems misalignment (political, financial, etc.), including those associated with inclusion in the “world society”¹. Modernization is not a clear and unambiguously positive process.

Third, economic growth does not always act as a guarantee of social well-being and mental health. E. Fromm gives an example, when on the background of economic prosperity the United States and several Western European countries witnessed a high rate of suicide and homicide². The scientist believes that the problem can be solved due to overcoming alienation in work, creating such an environment in production when labor is justified and an employee participates in the decision making.

Fourth, the population is ageing; the number of older people is growing. The question to reconsider the social role of the elderly in modern society arises. The studies carried out by Russian scientist V. Dobrokhleb reveal that in Russia a certain share of the older

age cohorts has resource potential (health, the high level of education, intelligence, the need to continue a working career, participate in public affairs)³.

Fifth, the modern social research is mostly focused on the study of deviancy, while the issues of standards are neglected. There is a practice to define the society’s states, relevant to the standard, through the concepts, representing the variances. In our opinion, the growth factors have the same research value as the degradation factors.

The ethical aspects of vocation are of particular importance in modern foreign publications. So, some people believe that profession chosen not in compliance with vocation can not meet the society’s needs; that is why it can not perform its social function. So, the author of numerous works in the field of theological and applied ethics James M. Gustafson says: “Considering profession as vocation reveals two features: 1) a high level of motivation and 2) a deeper vision of goals, profession serves⁴”. According to the scientist, “profession without vocation has no moral and humanistic roots; it loses its humanistic essence and limits the vision of the purposes it (profession) serves⁵”.

We agree with M.K. Gorshkov that the economy’s humanization is considered as the main imperative underlying the economic

¹ Luhmann N., Antonovskii A., Skuratov B., Timofeeva K. Modernizatsiya [Modernization]. *Samoopisaniya* [Self-description]. Translated from German. Moscow: Izdatel'stvo “Logos”, ITDGK “Gnozis”, 2009, pp. 233-239.

² Fromm E. *Zdorovoe obshchestvo* [Healthy Society]. Izdatel'stvo: OOO “Izdatel'stvo ACT”, 2005.

³ Dobrokhleb V.G. Resursnyi potentsial pozhilogo naseleniya Rossii [Resource Potential of the Elderly Population in Russia]. *Sotsiologicheskie issledovaniya* [Sociological Studies], 2008, no. 8, pp. 55-61.

⁴ Gustafson J.M. Professions as “Callings”. *The Social Service Review*, 1982, vol. 56, no. 4, p. 509.

⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 501.

growth models; and the success of the Russian society's modernization is associated with the improvement of the social environment, the spiritual development of the society and the moral values of people⁶.

Professional vocation is considered as an economic growth factor, a spiritual regulator of professional activity. It is connected with the moral and emotional attitude to work, developed labor motivation and creativity.

These assumptions are based on theoretical principles of German sociologies, such as M. Weber, G. Simmel and F. Tönnies. They disclose the essential features of the professional vocation phenomenon⁷.

There are some results of the research carried out by the author.

1. The conducted study reveals high prevalence of vocation as an identification characteristic of a person⁸.

The managers and employees most frequently give a positive answer to the question: "Does your profession (main occupation) coincide with your vocation, abilities and interests?" (in % of the respondents number):

managers of

- high-level 94.0;
- mid-level 79.8;
- lower level 57.9;

employees of

- production sphere 65.5;
- non-production sphere 75.9;

people with

- higher education 63.2;
- with secondary special education 49.8.

The unemployed (23.2%) and housewives (22.9%) admit the compliance of profession (main occupation) with vocation more rarely.

2. The results of the 2011 study⁹ indicate that the choice of profession in accordance

⁶ Gorshkov A.K. Ob aksiomaticheskoi traktovke vliyaniya neekonomicheskikh faktorov na ekonomicheskii rost [On the Axiomatic Interpretation of the Economic Factors' impact on Economic Growth]. *Ekonomicheskie i sotsial'nye peremeny: fakty, tendentsii, prognoz* [Economic and Social Changes: Facts, Trends, Forecast], 2014, no. 3 (33), pp. 46-48.

⁷ Weber M. *Izbrannye proizvedeniya* [Selected Works]. Moscow, 1990, p. 734; Simmel G. *Izbrannoe* [Selected Works]. Translated from German. In 2 volumes. Moscow, 1996, vol. 2, p. 524.

⁸ The study, the national survey, was conducted by the Institute of Sociology of NAS of Belarus according to the author's method within the framework of the task 5.01. "Social innovation is a source of sustainable development of the Belarusian society: human and institutional capacity" of GPSR "Economy and society" (scientific supervisor – Doctor of Sociology S.A. Shavel, July 2009, sampling size – 2101 persons over 16). The sampling is random and quoted. The survey method is a poll by place of residents, gender, age and education. The representativeness of the sample is ensured by the following conditions: the observance of the proportion between the population of Minsk (with separation of Minsk), Mogilev, Vitebsk, Grodno, Gomel and Brest regions; between the urban and rural population; the observance of the proportion between the population of the six "zones" within the regions (1 – Minsk and regional centers; 2 – cities with the population from 100 to 250 thousand people; 3 – cities with the population from 50 to 100 thousand people; 4 – cities with the populations from 10 to 50 thousand people; 5 – urban-type settlements with the population of less than 10 thousand people; 6 – rural population). Each "zone" is proportionally represented by the population with such characteristics as gender, age, education.

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Table 1. Satisfaction index value in case of the question: “Does your profession (main occupation) coincide with your abilities and interests?”

Are you satisfied with...?	Satisfaction index		
	Does your profession (main occupation) coincide with your abilities and interests?		
	Yes.	No.	Difficult to answer
Your health	0.424	0.329	0.385
Your financial situation	-0.341	-0.635	-0.422
Your work	0.428	-0.373	0.009
Relationship in your family	0.729	0.473	0.609
Your life in general	0.640	0.507	0.486

Table 2. Satisfaction index value in case of the question: “Does your profession (main occupation) coincide with your vocation?”

Are you satisfied with...?	Satisfaction index		
	Does your profession (main occupation) coincide with your vocation		
	Yes.	No.	Difficult to answer
Your health	0.472	0.229	0.453
Your financial situation	-0.308	-0.575	-0.417
Your work	0.506	-0.236	0.094
Relationship in your family	0.728	0.562	0.638
Your life in general	0.667	0.529	0.547

with abilities, interests and vocation is associated with higher satisfaction of life, work, the financial situation and a higher level of professional optimism.

The satisfaction indices in the group of young people aged 20–29 are presented in tables 1 and 2.

The satisfaction index ranges from “1” to “-1”, provided that the index value marked as “+” shows the numerical superiority of positive answers and as “-” – of negative ones. The index value equal to “1” corresponds to 100% frequency of the answers “satisfied”;

the value “-1” – to 100% frequency of the answers “not satisfied”.

The satisfaction indices are calculated by the formula:

$$I_{sat} = (A - B) / 100 ,$$

where

A is a frequency of the answers “satisfied”;

B is a frequency of the answers “not satisfied”.

The research into the indicators of subjective well-being in conjunction with the indicators of professional vocation

shows heuristicity of the proposed approach and considerable possibilities of its practical use.

The article does not represent all the study results.

At the same time, the concept “professional vocation” can be considered under the axiomatic approach due to the prevalence of the phenomenon, the sustainability of the data and the significant value essence.