

PROFESSIONAL DEFORMATION OF TEACHERS

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Abstract: This article describes the essence and causes of the pedagogical deformation. Changes as a result of professional activity, the following reasons for the tendency to "professional deformation" among young teachers, initial conditions of deformation, main causes of deformation, positive and negative consequences of professional deformation are presented. Several recommendations are also given about the prevention of occupational deformation.

Key words: deformation, professional deformation, personality deformation, professional stereotypes, professional issue, emotional exhaustion, energy reserve, psychomotor reactions

Introduction

It is well known that labor has a positive effect on the human psyche. With regard to various types of professional activity, it is acknowledged that there are many occupational groups that lead to occupational diseases specific to different professions. Performing the same professional activity for many years results in the emergence of professional fatigue, a deterioration in the repertoire of activity performance methods, the loss of professional skills and abilities, and a decline in work capacity. Professional deformations arise as a consequence of professional adaptation. Deformation (from the Latin *deformatio* – "distortion", "change") refers to changes in the form and functions of the body resulting from external and internal influences. Professional deformation is defined as negative changes that occur in a specialist's cognitive, behavioral, and motivational domains under the influence of internal and external factors during professional activity.

The term *professional deformation* originates from the latin *deformatio*, meaning "distortion" or "disfigurement", and undoubtedly carries a negative connotation. Professional deformation is an objectively occurring phenomenon that emerges in the process of personality development within professional activity, even if a person does not work intensively every day. Unlike other professions, the deformation of a single employee does not merely affect colleagues individually but is perceived by public consciousness as a deficiency of the entire professional group, thereby generating a corresponding stereotype. Professional deformations do not occur within a short period; rather, they develop over many years.

As a result of professional activity, changes occur in the following areas:

- professional performance;
- level of energy reserves;
- activity of psychomotor reactions;
- structure of relationships with surrounding people;
- position on professional issues.

In addition, the stability of the psyche and body in response to external stimuli changes. A decline or weakening of positive psychological traits is observed.

Professional deformations occur in all individuals; however, they do not always require corrective intervention. The severity of deformation and its impact on a person's life as an individual, citizen, and family member are of particular importance. The higher the level of emotional stress at work, the greater the likelihood of deformation. Conversely, as professional experience increases, emotional states often decline. Disorders may result from fatigue—an unstable psychological condition that arises against a background of heightened emotions and is accompanied by irritability, anxiety, excessive excitability, and nervous exhaustion. Ultimately, this leads to professional burnout, dissatisfaction, loss of prospects for growth, and professional breakdown (deformation) of the individual.

Research Methodology

In the classification of negative changes in personality, the term *professional deformation of personality* has often been widely used. Considering the specific characteristics of pedagogical activity, we propose the term *pedagogical professional deformation*, as teaching, like any other profession, has its own specific deformations. Therefore, professional deformation in teaching is interpreted as a phenomenon that, under the influence of professional activity, leads to changes in personal characteristics, distortion of the content of pedagogical activity, and negative changes in professional qualities and pedagogical abilities [1].

In the 1930s, psychotechnician S.G. Gellershtein noted that the content of professional activity is associated not merely with the performance of specific tasks by employees, but with the adaptation of the organism to certain aspects of the profession. Continuous interaction occurs between the worker's organism and external influences. As a result, deformation is observed not only in the body but also in the psyche. Deformation is generally interpreted as a change that affects the organism and forms significant characteristic traits within it.

The phenomenon of professional deformation was first described in the 1960s of the twentieth century, initially through the study of the teaching profession. Today, it is known that professional deformations most frequently occur in "person-person" (socioeconomic) professions. This is due to close interaction and mutual influence between specialists and clients.

The term *professional deformation* was first introduced by Pitirim Sorokin to describe the negative impact of professional activity on individuals. Professional deformations and their characteristics have been discussed in the works of scholars such as S.G. Gellershtein (1930), A.K. Markova (1996), E.F. Zeer (1999–2003), S.P. Beznosov (2004), R.M. Granovskaya (2010), and S.A. Druzhilov (2013). As emphasized by S.G. Gellershtein in the 1930s, "in an employee performing active and reactive actions, mental deformations appear first, followed by bodily deformations" [2].

A.K. Markova notes that "professional deformation of personality is caused by age-related changes (aging) of teachers, professional burnout, difficult and intolerable working conditions, prolonged stressful situations, and crises in labor and professional growth" [3]. Professional deformation represents a system of changes that arise in the process of professional activity and negatively affect its effectiveness, manifesting as undesirable traits in professional and personal behavior.

The teaching profession stands out among other professions due to its mass character and social significance. In pedagogical activity, teachers are in constant interaction with students,

their parents, and colleagues, which requires a high level of moral responsibility. Today, social demand for quality educational services and highly qualified, knowledgeable educators who are familiar with modern pedagogical technologies is steadily increasing. This requires teachers to possess deep knowledge, creative thinking, innovative approaches to education, international experience, and high intellectual potential. Consequently, the likelihood of professional deformation in pedagogical activity is increasing.

Teachers' professional deformation constitutes a direct risk factor that reduces the effectiveness and competitiveness of both the teacher and the entire education system. Therefore, the issue of preventing professional deformation among teachers has become highly relevant in the management of education quality. One of the key causes of professional deformation is labor division and increasing specialization, routine daily work, solving similar problems over many years, and failure to update professional knowledge, which leads to the formation of professional stereotypes.

The causes of professional and ethical deformation among teachers can be numerous. First of all, individual factors should be emphasized. Among young teachers, susceptibility to professional deformation can be explained by the following reasons (Figure 1).

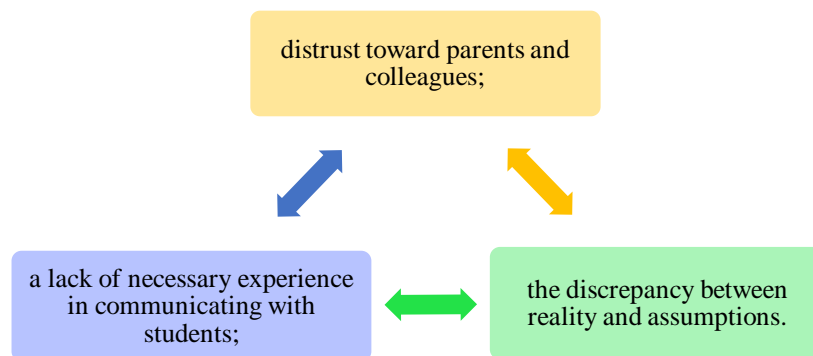


Figure 1. Causes of susceptibility to professional deformation among young teachers.

Young teachers are often willing to work excessively without realizing that such efforts are not always justified. Moving from one activity to another and analyzing mistakes, they often fail to understand why students do not listen to them.

The following factors can also be identified as causes of professional deformation in pedagogical activity:

- attempts to change individuals at a professional level;
- insufficient understanding of the essence and goals of activity;
- lack of desire to work in the profession;
- lack of self-confidence;
- improper discipline;
- weak control and lack of strict requirements from management;
- excessive official workload.

According to specialists, one of the most frequent causes of professional deformation is the specific environment in which a specialist is compelled to interact, as well as the particular characteristics of their professional activity.

Conclusions And Recommendations

Summarizing the above findings, the following conclusions and recommendations are proposed.

Prevention of professional deformation is a set of preventive measures aimed at reducing the likelihood of the development of initial conditions and manifestations of professional deformation. It is essential to master techniques of self-regulation, develop the ability to switch from one type of activity to another, strengthen willpower, and most importantly, avoid rigid adherence to stereotypes, norms, and patterns. Actions should be taken flexibly, in real time, and according to situational demands.

1. **Professional deformation** is a complex psychological and pedagogical phenomenon that develops in the course of professional activity and negatively affects an individual's cognitive, emotional, and behavioral domains, leading to a decline in professional effectiveness.

2. The emergence of professional deformation is primarily associated with prolonged emotional strain, the monotony of work activities, excessive reliance on professional stereotypes, and limited opportunities for self-development.

3. In pedagogical activity, professional deformation negatively influences not only teachers' professional performance but also the quality of the educational process, learners' development, and the overall effectiveness of the education system.

4. The prevention of professional deformation requires a systematic and comprehensive approach and is directly related to individuals' self-regulation abilities, psychological stability, and level of professional adaptation.

Recommendations

Preventing professional deformation involves identifying the conditions that cause it and implementing timely preventive measures to eliminate them. To avoid professional deformation, it is necessary to develop techniques of cognitive control and critically reflect on standards and stereotypes. One should continue to act thoughtfully and adaptively in response to changing conditions.

1. It is necessary to systematically integrate psychological training and practical exercises into the educational process to develop teachers' **self-regulation and self-control techniques**.

2. To prevent professional deformation, special attention should be given to developing teachers' skills in **switching between different types of activities, flexible thinking, and stress resilience**.

3. In pedagogical teams, it is essential to identify **organizational, psychological, and social conditions** that contribute to professional deformation and to implement preventive measures to address them.

4. To ensure teachers' professional development, it is recommended to **abandon rigid stereotypes and conventional approaches, apply innovative pedagogical technologies, and cultivate the ability to make prompt decisions in response to real-life situations**.

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