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## **PROFESSIONAL IMAGE OF THE FUTURE EDUCATIONAL MANAGER: STATE, CRITERIA, AND DIAGNOSTIC METHODS**

**Abstract.** The article presents a theoretical and methodological analysis of the problem of forming and diagnosing the professional image of a future educational manager in the context of the transformation of the modern educational space. The relevance of the study is substantiated by the growing requirements for managerial, communicative, and social effectiveness of heads of educational institutions. The essence of the concept of the “professional image of an educational manager” is revealed as an integrative construct that combines personal, professional-competence, value-motivational, and behavioral-communicative characteristics. The criteria for the formation of the professional image of a future educational manager (motivational-value, cognitive, activity-behavioral, reflective-evaluative) and the corresponding indicators of their manifestation are defined and characterized. A set of methods and diagnostic tools is presented that ensures a comprehensive assessment of the state of the professional image at various stages of professional training, including questionnaires, testing, expert assessment, self-assessment, and pedagogical observation. Levels of professional image formation (high, medium, low) are outlined, as well as the possibilities of using diagnostic results to adjust the educational process. The purpose of the study is to determine the state of formation of the professional image of future educational managers and to substantiate the criteria, indicators, and methods for its diagnosis in the process of professional training. The proposed study makes it possible to systematize approaches to diagnosing the professional image of educational managers, identify the components and criteria of image formation, and create a methodological basis for assessing the training of managers in higher education institutions. The research objectives include analyzing modern approaches to characterizing professional qualities and image characteristics of future specialists in educational management, determining criteria and indicators of the formation of the professional image of educational managers, and describing diagnostic tools for assessing the formation of the professional image of future educational managers. It is emphasized that diagnosing the professional image of future educational managers is a complex, multidimensional process that requires a systemic and scientifically grounded approach. It serves not only as a tool for assessing the state of image formation but also as an important factor in its purposeful development in the course of professional training, ensuring the improvement of the quality of managerial education and the readiness of future specialists for effective professional activity.

**Keywords:** professional image, educational manager, criteria, indicators, diagnostic methods, professional training.

## **ПРОФЕСІЙНИЙ ІМІДЖ МАЙБУТНЬОГО МЕНЕДЖЕРА ОСВІТИ: СТАН, КРИТЕРІЇ ТА МЕТОДИ ДІАГНОСТИКИ**

**Анотація.** У статті здійснено теоретико-методологічний аналіз проблеми формування та діагностики професійного іміджу майбутнього менеджера освіти в умовах трансформації сучасного освітнього простору. Обґрунтовано актуальність дослідження, зумовлену зростанням вимог до управлінської, комунікативної та соціальної ефективності керівників закладів освіти. Розкрито сутність поняття «професійний імідж менеджера освіти» як інтегративного утворення, що поєднує особистісні, професійно-компетентнісні, ціннісно-мотиваційні та поведінково-комунікативні характеристики. Визначено та схарактеризовано критерії сформованості професійного іміджу майбутнього менеджера освіти (мотиваційно-ціннісний, когнітивний, діяльнісно-поведінковий, рефлексивно-оцінний) і відповідні показники їх прояву. Представлено комплекс методів і діагностичних інструментів, що забезпечують цілісне оцінювання стану професійного іміджу на різних етапах фахової підготовки, зокрема анкетування, тестування, експертне оцінювання, самооцінку та педагогічне спостереження. Окреслено рівні сформованості професійного іміджу (високий, середній, низький) та можливості використання результатів діагностики для корекції освітнього процесу. Метою дослідження



є визначення стану сформованості професійного іміджу майбутніх менеджерів освіти, обґрунтування критеріїв, показників і методів його діагностики в процесі професійної підготовки. Запропоноване дослідження дозволяє систематизувати підходи до діагностики професійного іміджу освітніх менеджерів, окреслити компоненти та критерії сформованості іміджу, а також створює методичну базу для оцінювання підготовки менеджерів в закладах вищої в освіти. Завдання дослідження включають аналіз сучасних підходів до характеристики професійних якостей та іміджевих характеристик майбутніх фахівців у галузі управління освітою, визначення критеріїв та індикаторів сформованості професійного іміджу менеджерів освіти, опис інструментарію для діагностики формування професійного іміджу майбутніх менеджерів освіти. Наголошується, що діагностика професійного іміджу майбутніх менеджерів освіти є складним багатовимірним процесом, що потребує системного, науково обґрунтованого підходу. Вона виступає не лише інструментом оцінювання стану сформованості іміджу, а й важливим чинником його цілеспрямованого розвитку в процесі професійної підготовки, забезпечуючи підвищення якості управлінської освіти та готовність майбутніх фахівців до ефективної професійної діяльності.

**Ключові слова:** професійний імідж, менеджер освіти, критерії, показники, методи діагностики, фахова підготовка.

## INTRODUCTION

**The problem formulation.** In the current conditions of transformation of the educational system under the influence of social, economic, and technological challenges, the role of the educational manager as a key subject of managerial activity is significantly increasing. The professional image of an educational manager serves not only as a reflection of personal and professional qualities but also as an important factor in the effectiveness of interaction with colleagues, learners, and society as a whole. Within the educational space, the professional image of an educational manager emerges as a crucial factor in enhancing the effectiveness of managerial activity, building trust in an educational institution, and creating a positive socio-psychological climate within the teaching staff.

The formation of the professional image of a future educational manager is a holistic process that encompasses the development of professional and personal qualities, the advancement of ethical and communicative skills, and the mastery of self-presentation, self-regulation, and leadership technologies. Despite the growing attention to managerial functions in education, there remains a certain gap between normative and structural management models and the practical mechanisms of self-presentation and perception of educational managers as professionals, as well as effective practices for diagnosing their professional training. In scholarly research, the issue of diagnosing the level of formation of the professional image has not been addressed in a sufficiently systematic manner, which highlights the need for methodological and empirical substantiation of relevant criteria, indicators, and assessment methods.

The proposed study makes it possible to systematize approaches to diagnosing the professional image of educational managers, clearly define the components and criteria of image formation, and create a methodological basis for assessing the training of educational managers within educational programs. The objectives of the study include: analyzing modern approaches to diagnosing professional qualities and image characteristics of future specialists in the field of educational management; determining criteria and indicators of the formation of the professional image of educational managers; and describing diagnostic tools for assessing the level of formation of the professional image of future educational managers.

**Analysis of recent research and publications.** The problem of forming the image of an educational manager has been addressed in the works of V. Bondar, L. Kalinina, T. Sorochan, H. Yelnykova, and L. Danylenko, while issues of professional image have been explored in the studies of N. Kuzmina, I. Ziaziun, S. Maksymenko, V. Lozova, and I. Podlasyi. However, the structural and functional foundations of this process require further clarification, which determines the relevance of the present study. The development of the image of a teacher's personality has become the subject of scientific inquiry by both domestic scholars (K. Atamanska, V. Bondarenko, N. Huzii, I. Ziaziun, A. Kaliuzhnyi, O. Plakhotnyk, I. Chervinska, and others) and foreign researchers (P. Bird, K. Boulding, A. Dodge, L. Roberts). The essence and substantive content of the professional image of educators have been described in the scientific works of A. Kononenko, A. Korkishko, I. Nikolayescu, L. Sushchenko, and O. Khudenko, among others. Issues of imagology, including conceptual foundations, practice-oriented tools, and educational resources, have been revealed in the works of L. Brown, A. Panasiuk, and A. Korkishko.

The analysis of the literature demonstrates that the professional image of an educational manager has a multi-component structure. Accordingly, there has emerged a need to highlight a comprehensive methodology for diagnosing the level of its formation and to systematically integrate theoretical and empirical approaches for assessing and developing the image-related qualities and professional characteristics of future educational managers.

## AIM OF THE RESEARCH

The purpose of the article is to determine the level of formation of the professional image of future educational managers and to substantiate the criteria, indicators, and methods for its diagnosis in the process of professional training.

## RESEARCH METHODS

To achieve the stated objectives, the following methods were employed: theoretical methods, including analysis, synthesis, generalization, and comparison of scientific sources for defining key concepts and constructing the conceptual framework of the study; empirical methods, including a questionnaire survey of future educational managers to collect data on the level of formation of image-related characteristics. These methods ensure a systemic approach to diagnosing the professional image of future educational managers by combining quantitative and qualitative assessment tools.



## RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH

In the current context of transformation of the educational system, driven by rapid digitalization, increased public visibility of managerial decisions, growing competitiveness of educational institutions in the educational services market, and rising societal expectations regarding managerial activity, the professional image of an educational manager acquires the status of an important integrative indicator of professional maturity and managerial effectiveness. Today, a future educational manager acts not only as an administrator of the educational process but also as a leader, communicator, facilitator of change, bearer of values and norms of behavior, business ethics and communication, and a representative of the educational institution in the public sphere.

At the same time, the analysis of educational practice indicates that the process of forming the professional image of future educational managers in higher education institutions is often fragmented or spontaneous, and its diagnosis is not always based on clearly defined criteria, indicators, and scientifically grounded tools. This actualizes the problem of determining the level of formation of the professional image of future educational managers and developing effective approaches to its diagnosis.

In the scientific and pedagogical context, diagnostics is understood as a systematic study of the state, level of development, or effectiveness of a particular phenomenon aimed at identifying patterns, forecasting, and correction. According to K. Ingenkamp, a well-known German scholar and a leading researcher in the field of educational diagnostics, "pedagogical diagnostics is also regarded as a process of recognizing phenomena and determining their state at a certain moment based on the use of parameters necessary for this purpose. Such an interpretation makes it possible to distinguish the specificity of pedagogical diagnostics as an independent type of activity and to reveal its essence, goals, and objectives" (Ingenkamp, 1975). In this context, researcher I. Chervinska emphasizes that "pedagogical diagnostics is a tool for objectively assessing the readiness of future specialists for professional activity and the formation of their image" (Chervinska I., 2024).

Researcher V. Uruskyi, in the work *Pedagogical Diagnostics*, reveals various aspects of pedagogical activity, focusing on:

Managerial aspect – how a teacher analyzes, plans, organizes, controls, and regulates the process of interaction with learners.

Psychological aspect – how the teacher's personality influences learners, how individual characteristics of learners are taken into account, and how learning motivation is determined and created.

Pedagogical aspect – through which forms and methods the teacher conveys the content of educational material (Uruskyi V., 2012).

Taking into account the proposed aspects of pedagogical activity, and in accordance with the purpose, subject of evaluation, and methodological approach to determining the formation of the professional image of a future educational manager, it is advisable to distinguish the following types of diagnostics of the professional image of future educational managers:

Self-diagnostics, aimed at identifying learners' awareness of their own professional image, the development of reflective skills, and the ability for self-analysis and self-correction. It is implemented through questionnaires, reflective essays, and self-assessment scales.

Expert diagnostics, as an innovative type of diagnostics, involves assessment of the professional image by teachers, academic supervisors, internship supervisors, and employers. This type of diagnostics allows comparison of learners' subjective perceptions with external professional evaluations.

Socio-perceptive diagnostics, aimed at determining how a future educational manager is perceived by peers, participants in the educational process, and representatives of the professional community. This type of diagnostics is particularly significant for assessing the communicative and behavioral components of the professional image.

Comprehensive (integrated) diagnostics, which combines various methods and sources of information, ensuring objectivity and reliability of results and allowing determination of the overall level of formation of the professional image (low, medium, sufficient, high).

The formation of the professional image of future educational managers is a complex socio-pedagogical process that involves the purposeful integration of cognitive, value-based, behavioral, and reflective components of personality and combines personal development, professional training, and socio-cultural adaptation of the future specialist.

Diagnostics of the professional image of a future educational manager is a purposeful, systemic process of identifying the level of formation of personal-professional, communicative, value-motivational, and behavioral-activity characteristics that ensure a positive perception of the subject of managerial activity within and beyond the educational environment. Scientifically sound diagnostics of the professional image presupposes the determination of methodological approaches, structural components of the image, selection of criteria and indicators of their formation, and the use of a set of complementary methods, as well as the combination of self-assessment and external expert evaluation.

To conduct scientifically grounded diagnostics, it is advisable to rely on a system of interrelated methodological approaches that ensure the comprehensiveness, coherence, and effectiveness of this process. These include the systemic, structural-functional, competence-based, activity-based, personality-oriented, axiological, acmeological, and integrative approaches, which together ensure the multidimensionality of the process of forming the professional image of a future educational manager and reveal the integrity and logic of this process.



*The systemic approach* allows the formation of the professional image to be viewed as a holistic dynamic system in which all structural elements (goals, content, methods, forms, and results) are interconnected and subordinated to a common goal the creation of a positive, professionally significant image of a future educational manager.

*The structural-functional approach* serves as the methodological basis for constructing the model, as it makes it possible to identify structural blocks (target, content, procedural, and result-oriented) and define the functions of each.

*The competence-based approach* orients the model toward achieving results in the form of developed key professional competencies that determine the image of an educational manager as a modern leader, organizer, and communicator.

*The activity-based approach* defines the formation of the professional image as the result of the subject's active engagement, emphasizing conscious participation in self-knowledge, self-development, and self-presentation.

*The personality-oriented approach* views learners as subjects of their own professional development, focusing on self-awareness, self-analysis, and the formation of confidence in professional value.

*The axiological approach* emphasizes the value dimension of the professional image, highlighting moral and ethical foundations such as humanism, responsibility, tolerance, professional honor, and pedagogical culture.

*The acmeological approach* focuses on achieving the highest levels of professional development, viewing image formation as a path toward professional excellence and leadership maturity.

*The integrative approach* unites all previous approaches into a single methodological system, ensuring the interaction of pedagogical, psychological, managerial, and sociocultural aspects and promoting the harmonious development of motivational, cognitive, behavioral, and reflective components of the professional image.

Thus, the representation of the process of forming the professional image of future educational managers is based on the interaction of a number of methodological approaches, the synthesis of which constitutes a unified conceptual foundation for an in-depth analysis of this process. Such an approach ensures scientific coherence, structural logic, and functional completeness of the model, as well as its practical effectiveness in the process of professional training of future educational managers.

The professional image of an educational manager is a multi-component formation that includes external, behavioral, socio-communicative, value-motivational, and digital-informational aspects. For its comprehensive assessment in the process of professional training, it is necessary to identify clear criteria and relevant indicators that make it possible to measure the level of formation of this integrative professional quality. To ensure the effectiveness and reliability of assessing the formation of the professional image of a future educational manager, it is essential to describe the basic criteria and leading indicators that reveal the integrity of the diagnostic process.

*The criteria for assessing the formation of the professional image include:*

*The cognitive criterion* reflects the level of students' professional awareness of the essence of image, ethics, norms of professional behavior, principles of business communication, and requirements for managerial activity. It includes knowledge of the theoretical foundations of imagology, educational management, and business ethics acquired through relevant academic disciplines (Professional Ethics of an Educational Manager, Imagology in the Modern World), understanding of psychological and social mechanisms of image formation, and the ability to reflect on and self-assess one's own professional image.

*The personal-motivational criterion* characterizes students' internal readiness for professional self-development, their value orientations, professional responsibility, and motivation to form a positive professional image. It includes the formation of professional identity, stable motivation for improving professional competencies, orientation toward ethical standards of managerial activity, and a pronounced need for professional self-improvement.

*The communicative-behavioral criterion* assesses the student's ability to demonstrate professional behavior, interact effectively with others, adhere to etiquette norms, and appropriately present themselves in the professional environment. It includes speech style, behavioral culture, nonverbal components, public speaking and presentation skills, the ability to engage in constructive communication, and conflict resolution skills.

*The organizational-managerial criterion* evaluates the level of formation of time-management skills, activity planning, project management, and the ability to work in a team. It includes effective time management, the ability to organize the activities of others, responsibility, discipline, punctuality, and strategic thinking in managerial situations.

*The visual-representational criterion* characterizes the formation of an external (visual) image that corresponds to professional norms and expectations of the educational environment. It includes compliance of appearance with professional standards, neatness, presentability, adherence to business style norms, and the ability to select visual means of representation (presentations, portfolios, etc.).

One of the tools for diagnosing the professional image of a future educational manager is the system of indicators of its formation.

Indicators are specific parameters by which the level of manifestation of a particular criterion can be assessed. Educational indicators are defined as numerical measures used as benchmarks in the development and monitoring of educational policy. In the educational field, an indicator is understood as statistical data collected in accordance with state educational policy, providing information about the condition, level, stability, or changes in the functioning or effectiveness of the education system and its individual components (Monitoring of Educational Standards, 2003).





*Indicators of the cognitive criterion* determine the accuracy of identifying the components of the professional image, the ability to explain managerial and communicative principles, the level of mastery of general imagology and professional ethics norms, and the ability to analyze the effectiveness of the image of real educational managers.

*Indicators of the personal-motivational criterion* characterize the development of clearly formulated professional goals, a positive attitude toward self-development and professional improvement, and the ability to self-present through participation in professional events, training programs, competitions, and the development of an electronic portfolio.

*Indicators of the communicative-behavioral criterion* determine the level of speech culture, clarity and logic of expression, appropriateness of nonverbal behavior (gestures, posture, distance), emotional restraint and stress resistance, mastery of business communication techniques, and competence in negotiations and conflict resolution.

*Indicators of the organizational-managerial criterion* describe the ability to create individual and team activity plans, effectiveness in project management, rational use of time, control over task completion, and initiative in solving professional situations.

*Indicators of the visual-representational criterion* characterize compliance with business dress code rules, neatness, restraint in appearance, quality of presentation and documentation design, and the ability to create a professional image in the digital environment (social media, electronic communication).

It should be noted that criteria and indicators do not exist in isolation; they interact systematically, forming a holistic professional image of a future educational manager. All criteria function in close interrelation, ensuring the multidimensional formation of a positive professional image. Collectively, the proposed criteria and indicators constitute a comprehensive assessment system that enables a thorough analysis of the formation of the professional image and allows for systematic evaluation of the effectiveness of pedagogical conditions, educational programs, and specially designed managerial training.

The formation of a professional image is the result of the synergy of all criteria, as each influences the others. For example, the cognitive block provides the theoretical foundation necessary for conscious professional self-presentation; the personal-motivational criterion determines readiness to maintain and develop one's image; the communicative-behavioral criterion ensures external manifestation in interaction; the organizational-managerial criterion shapes professional reliability and effectiveness; and the visual-representational criterion creates the first impression and supports overall professional perception. Together, these components form an integral model of professional image formation, where a high level of each criterion reinforces the others, while a deficit in any component reduces the overall image potential.

The professional image of a future educational manager is a complex integrative formation that develops within an image-forming environment during professional training and manifests itself in stable personal, behavioral, and activity-related characteristics of the managerial subject. For scientifically sound diagnostics, it should be considered as a multi-component system whose elements are closely interconnected and interdependent.

The structure of the professional image of a future educational manager includes the following components: *motivational-value, cognitive (knowledge-based), communicative-behavioral, personal-reflective, and visual-presentational*.

*The motivational-value component* reflects the internal readiness of a future educational manager to purposefully form their professional image, as well as their value orientations, professional attitudes, and managerial motives. It includes awareness of the social and professional significance of image, stable motivation for professional self-development and self-presentation, orientation toward humanistic, ethical, and democratic values of management, and a positive attitude toward innovation, publicity, and open communication.

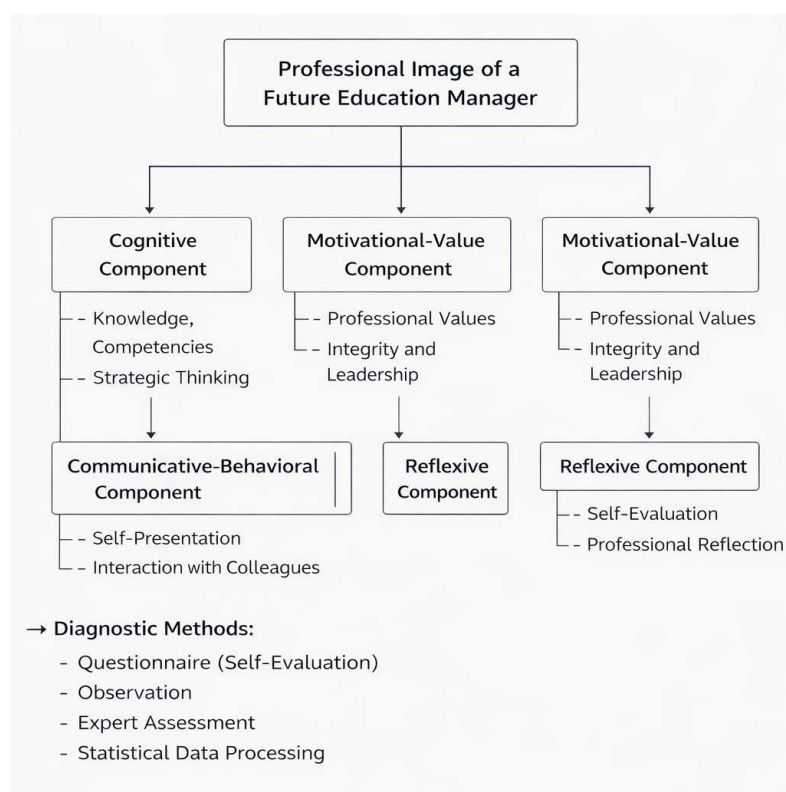
*The cognitive (knowledge-based) component* characterizes the volume, systematization, and awareness of knowledge regarding the essence, structure, functions, and mechanisms of professional image formation. It includes knowledge of imagology, educational management, business communication, professional ethics, corporate culture, managerial etiquette, public presentation technologies, branding of educational institutions, and digital reputation management.

*The communicative-behavioral component* reflects the practical realization of professional image in managerial interaction and behavior. It includes speech culture, public communication skills, dialogue and negotiation abilities, conflict resolution skills, adaptability of behavioral style, and adherence to ethical norms.

*The personal-reflective component* characterizes the ability to recognize, evaluate, and correct one's professional image, including developed professional reflection, adequate self-assessment, openness to constructive criticism, and emotional self-regulation oriented toward continuous professional development.

*The visual-presentational component* represents external and symbolic manifestations of professional image, including business appearance, nonverbal communication, offline and digital self-presentation, and the ability to form a positive personal and professional brand.

Thus, identifying and analyzing the structural components of the process of forming the professional image of a future educational manager provides a methodological basis for its holistic diagnostics. Each component performs an independent function, while only their integration ensures the formation of a stable, positive, and professionally significant image.



*Fig. 1. Professional Image of a Future Educational Manager*

Diagnostics of the professional image of future educational managers is based on a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods, ensuring a comprehensive assessment of the level of formation of its structural components and enabling identification of both the current state and the potential for further development. The diagnostic toolkit includes questionnaires and surveys, psychodiagnostic methods, pedagogical observation, expert evaluation, analysis of learning and professional activity products, and reflective methods.

Among the diagnostic methods, we propose to highlight the following:

1. Questionnaires and surveys are basic diagnostic methods aimed at identifying the self-assessment of the professional image, the level of awareness of its significance, and the readiness for purposeful image formation. Author-developed questionnaires such as "Professional Image of an Educational Manager", self-assessment scales of professional qualities, and surveys regarding attitudes toward managerial activity and public communication are used. This method allows assessing the motivational-value component of the professional image, including professional attitudes, value orientations, and aspirations for self-development and managerial self-realization.

2. Psychodiagnostic methods (standardized psychodiagnostic instruments) are used to study personal characteristics that determine the effectiveness of managerial image. These include methods for assessing communicative and organizational tendencies, leadership tests, emotional intelligence diagnostics, and methods for studying stress resistance and self-regulation. These methods enable the diagnosis of the personal-behavioral component, which reflects the future educational manager's ability to interact effectively, manage a team, and constructively resolve professional situations.

3. Pedagogical observation is used to identify the actual behavior of students in educational-professional situations (business games, trainings, managerial cases, public presentations). The style of managerial behavior, speech culture, nonverbal communication, argumentation skills, and decision-making abilities, as well as adherence to ethical norms of professional activity, are recorded. This method allows comparing the declared and actual image, which is important for comprehensive diagnostics.

4. Expert evaluation method involves engaging teachers, practice supervisors, and administrative staff of educational institutions to assess manifestations of the professional image of future managers. Evaluation is conducted according to established criteria and indicators, including professional competence, managerial culture, communicative effectiveness, and image attractiveness in the professional environment. This method ensures the objectivity of the diagnostic results and reduces the influence of subjective self-assessment.

5. Analysis of products and outcomes of educational-professional activity (portfolios, resumes, managerial projects, presentations, analytical reports, public presentations) allows assessment of the cognitive-professional component of the image. Particular attention is paid to the logic and justification of managerial decisions, the ability for strategic thinking, the quality of public self-presentation, and the use of modern managerial and digital tools.



6. Self-analysis and reflective methods are implemented through reflective journals, essays, and SWOT-analysis of one's professional image. They contribute to identifying the reflective-evaluative component, which reflects the future educational manager's ability for critical consideration of their professional image and ways to improve it.

The application of a complex of diagnostic methods ensures a multidimensional study of the professional image of future educational managers, helps determine the levels of its formation (low, medium, high), and provides a basis for highlighting effective pedagogical conditions and practical technologies for purposeful image formation during professional training. The purposeful combination of quantitative and qualitative diagnostic methods contributes to a comprehensive study of the levels of professional image formation in future educational managers.

The purposeful integration of quantitative and qualitative diagnostic methods contributes to a comprehensive study of the levels of professional image formation. Based on the analysis of criteria and indicators, the following levels have been identified:

*Low level* – fragmented understanding of professional image, situational motivation, insufficient communicative culture, lack of reflective skills.

*Medium level* – partial awareness of the significance of image, basic knowledge and skills, unstable professional behavior, limited self-reflection.

*Sufficient level* – formed motivation, systematic knowledge, stable managerial behavior, ability to self-correct the image.

*High level* – integrity of professional image, conscious self-presentation, high level of reflection, stable positive reputation in the educational environment.

### CONCLUSIONS AND PROSPECTS OF FURTHER RESEARCH

Thus, diagnostics of the professional image of future educational managers is a complex, multidimensional process that requires a systemic and scientifically grounded approach. It serves not only as a tool for assessing the level of image formation but also as an important factor in its purposeful development during professional training, ensuring improved quality of managerial education and readiness of future specialists for effective professional activity.

Further research will focus on studying the processes of modeling managerial activity of future educational managers.

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