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## VOCATION: THEORY AND PRACTICE

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*Abstract:* The core paradigm of the role of the phenomenon of vocation in being of a human as a spiritual mystery and a rational choice at the same time is emphasised. We consider the problem of the mystery of vocation in the spiritual-axiological (Christological) context of consideration and secular (so-called profane) understanding with a logical approach to modern-rational, research, and empirical paradigms of understanding and representation.

The work analyses the results of the study of the guidance and actions of Ukrainian psychology students regarding the realisation of one's vocation in the field of spiritual searches, in real life and virtual life space. The phenomenon of vocation is considered as a significant personal construct, which becomes a factor in its successful life self-realisation and achievement of psychological well-being. It is stated that a conscious vocation is a key to the successful professional self-determination of a young person and a factor in the effectiveness of their further professionalisation.

*Keywords:* vocation, calling, self-realisation, answering the calling, harmony, future psychologists, charisma.

### Introduction

Vocation... Calling... The answer to the calling... For each person, these words first outline the breadth of the space of incomprehensible, indecipherable concerns in the soul of a young person; then - the desire and will to find their place in life; further - a desire for professional self-determination; the need to find one's self, to understand it, to comprehend it, to make sense of it..., therefore - the realisation of what has be-

come an accentuated expression of the phenomenon of vocation and, finally, - either satisfaction from the rightly chosen life path, or contradictions and a sense of error, mistake, lost time and wasted life... Vocation is the embodiment of the mystery of an inexplicable desire to find answers and understand the meaning of "eternal questions", the path to oneself, the mystery of the reasons and foundations for the essence of a particular choice, the mystery of touching the truth...

The source knowledge base from the Christo-

logical context of the actualized problem usually includes representatives of the Catholic and Greek Catholic theological traditions of understanding the phenomenon of vocation.

A characteristic feature of local literature on the issue is a noticeable focus on the pragmatic paradigm of empirical results or the family and antitheistic (the one related to sacralization of the land) perspective of reflective research attention.

The modern cut of the actualization of this problem embodies the following accents and reflections - it is not enough for the modern human of the postmodern era to simply satisfy their basic living and mental needs while living in peace and stability. The simple experience of well-being appears to be insipid and stagnant as a result of increased individual tolerance to the uncertainty of social development. A modern person as a subject needs challenges, steep piques in the implementation of their own life strategy, conquests, publicity, recognition - and against the background of these achievements, experiencing a state of happiness, euphoric enjoyment of bright self-realisation. Such new trends are accompanied by the traditional dilemma of the relationship between the form and content of life creation. At the same time, saturation, dynamism, fullness, completeness, and even extremity of life in a certain sense appear as the desired form. But the content of the question is more complicated.

Local mass media and social networks are currently promoting a generalised, collective image of a successful specialist - a businessman who effortlessly "makes money" and then spends it on entertainment. His life and professional credo is to get to the right place at the right time. At the same time, the image of a weak, neglected and embittered pensioner is shown, whose circle of interests is focused on the problems of increasing prices for products and medicines, and rising tariffs for communal services. Self-centeredness, mercantilism and pragmatism of a modern person have become their widespread psychological characteristics, typical qualities of a market personality according to E. Fromm (1976). An individual's response to the dominance of the worldview position of "having" over the position of "being" becomes a powerful experience of an existential crisis, when a person feels devastated due to the collapse of relationships or loss of status, unfulfilled due to a

neglected identity, overshadowed by a feeling of total hopelessness due to burnout and resource depletion. Therefore, solving the issue of the content of life-making requires an appeal or rather a return of the individual to their own authenticity, spiritual essence and the construction of an individual trajectory of self-realisation on this basis.

Life self-determination of Ukrainian youth takes place against the background of complicated social dynamics, such as warfare, deterioration of the economic situation, impoverishment of the population, migration processes, rising unemployment, uncontrolled market resource and financial transformations, etc. On the one hand, this creates anxiety, confusion and uncertainty about the future, and on the other, it encourages a young person to be more conscious and responsible towards professional choice and further professional training, based on internal motives, including the identification and realisation of one's own vocation as a deep psychological construct. At the same time, the question arises: what semantic meaning does a young person attach to the concept of "vocation"? We consider this question to be particularly relevant for future psychologists who are concerned with the problem of finding and realising a vocation from two perspectives: firstly, as subjects of their own life path, and secondly, as future specialists, who in the future will work with problems of self-realisation of their clients. And these two perspectives are closely intertwined since a psychologist, who carries out his professional activity based on an embodied vocation, has the potential to provide quality psychological assistance to clients, including in matters of their life self-determination and self-realisation.

The objective of the article is a dualistic presentation of the vocation phenomenon in a philosophical-sacred section followed by analysis in a modern-pragmatic empirical context. The analysis of the results of the study of the instructions of psychology students regarding the vocation as the leading motive of the life self-realisation of the individual is presented.

## Material and Methods

The focus of our scientific investigation, in accordance with the analysed issues, was on stu-

dents who are studying psychology at the Boris Grinchenko Kyiv University. The total number of research participants was 165 students, the average age of the respondents was 21 years, the youngest was 17 years old, and the oldest was 25. All research participants were informed about its purpose and compliance with the principle of confidentiality due to the anonymity of their answers and expressed their voluntary consent to participate in it. The research was carried out from September-December 2021 - 2022. At the first, diagnostic stage, the questionnaire method (the author's development of the content of the questionnaire) and semantic differential method were used, then at the stage of data processing, the methods of quantitative and qualitative analysis were applied - average values, percentage ratios, ranking - with the help of the statistical program IBM SPSS Statistics (version 26). The study was completed with the interpretation and generalisation of the received diagnostic data.

### The Spiritual and Theoretical Context of Accentuation of the Problem

Comprehension of one's calling (the question of the meaning of life) becomes especially relevant in times of life upheavals and trials, difficult moments and existential crises. After all, the desire to find one's calling often arises when a person is in a state of despair and disappointment regarding the life path they have passed. And this desire quite often focuses on the sacred, religious context of world understanding. The path of finding "yourself", the touch of finding "meaning, especially the path to "your place under the sun"... is sometimes accompanied by the "way to God", and, of course, these paths can meet and cross in the sphere of finding one's vocation. The secret of this intersection is equally related to people from the secular world, from the realm of priestly service, and from the world of monasticism or hermitage.

According to the Christian creed, all people are created in the "image and likeness of God" (*English Standard Version Bible*, 2001, Gen. 5.1), therefore, by nature, every person has the aspiration in their heart to become the image and likeness of God, to become holy, "because God is holy": "...Be holy people to me, ... for I am

holy" (*English Standard Version Bible*, 2001, Ex. 22, 30; Lev. 11, 44). So, the call to holiness, according to Christian ethics, is the calling for all people, but each individual realises this universal calling in a specific state of their life: in professional activity, surrounded by relatives and friends, in married life, in monastic life, etc.

The Christian theological tradition usually directly connects the question of finding one's vocation with the problem of being able to hear God's call as such. Hear and accept. At the very beginning of His missionary activity, Jesus Christ called the apostles, whom after his Resurrection he instructed and entrusted to continue this His mission, so that the Gospel would be preached to all people of all generations without exception. Christ's call was not only to the chosen apostles but also to all the faithful. Thus, the Church teaches that through the Holy Mystery of Baptism, a person becomes an apostle, a messenger, that is, he receives a calling from God to proclaim the Good News, God's Science among all the people of the earth (Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity, 1996).

From the above – according to the statement of the Krehiv monastery of St. Nicholas, hiermonk Panteleimon Samakha – the idea emerges that every Christian must be an apostle of Jesus Christ and His Gospel. This is the general calling of every Christian. However, one cannot forget the fact that Christ chose those apostles who left everything and devoted themselves only to the service of God and the continuation of His mission. Namely - the preaching of the Salvation News to all people. This is a vocation specifically to the monastic and priestly state (Kabal hiermonk Anastasii Andrii, 2008, p. 5). And, a priori, this is a special, exclusive vocation, before which both non-believers and those who are indifferent bow their heads.

French researcher Philippe Madre (2008), considering the problem of finding a vocation and fundamentally connecting its content with the ability to love and the desire to hear the call of God, among other things, states: "...the call of God opens the greatest happiness that is given to people on this Earth. The call of God is one of the most undeniable proofs of His love. The call of God reveals to man the meaning of his existence. God calls... but how?" (p. 5). In this context, it is appropriate to turn to the Eternal Book and state that many people have already recog-

nized their vocation, responded to it and are living it. There are many such people today who sacrificially responded to this calling of Christ: "Follow me!" (*English Standard Version Bible*, 2001, Jn. 21, 22).

It is interesting and significant that the Synod of Bishops of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church declared 2008 as the Year of the Christian Vocation (*Resolution 6 of the Synod of Bishops of the UGCC*, 2007). Therefore, it can be concluded that the Church as an institution is strongly focused on the problem of finding and understanding the mystery of vocation, fundamentally focuses the attention of believers on its fulfilment or, at least, on recognizing the key accents of their vocation, so that - as Kabal hiermonk Anastasii Andrii writes - "...in - the atmosphere prayers and intentions to listen to the words of Jesus Christ, where He speaks, who and what is the calling that He Himself gave them" (*Holy fathers on prayer and spiritual sobriety*, 2007).

From the point of view of Christological tradition, "every vocation is always a gift of God himself" (Kabal hiermonk Anastasii Andrii, 2008, p. 7). We read about vocation as the embodiment of God's gift from the prophet Jeremiah: "I knew you before I formed you in your mother's womb. Before you were born I set you apart and appointed you as my prophet to the nations" (*English Standard Version Bible*, 2001, Jer. 1, 5). Christ himself also speaks about this, saying to his disciples: "You did not choose me, but I chose you" (*English Standard Version Bible*, 2001, Jn. 15, 16). These words of the Holy Scripture state that every vocation is a self-sufficient gift that the Lord God bestows on every person. Even before birth, God the Creator gives a vocation to every person. The context of the fact that God gives a vocation even before birth is the unique vocation of the Holy Mother of God.

Thus, from the point of view of the Christian vector of understanding this problem - the Creator has his specific plan for each person, smaller or larger, but in the eyes of God they are important and unique. Every person has a vocation. There is no such person who would be deprived of it. However, before answering the question of his vocation, each person must first know it.

Theologians fundamentally and repeatedly emphasise that "...the call that God gives to a

person does not have the slightest sign of enslavement. Each person can accept or reject it in a completely free way".

So, it can be concluded that from a Christologically focused point of view, every person has a calling that the Lord God gave them even before their birth, however, before responding to this God's calling, it is necessary to know it. And in order to realise your vocation, you need to make an effort. However, in this recognition of your vocation, you cannot rely only on yourself and your efforts. It is necessary to trust and rely also on God and reckon with Him, because the Lord, who gives the call, assures us of His specific help: "Do not be afraid, for I am with you" (*English Standard Version Bible*, 2001, Jer. 1, 8). Vocation includes faith, full of hope in God and His help. From a religious point of view, God expects from a person complete trust and readiness to fulfil their vocation, to which He has appointed them.

Reflecting on the core questions in the process of discerning one's vocation, it is worth paying attention to the fact that, according to the observation of theologians, those persons who turn to their self in search of their own path, personal purpose, individual vocation mainly have the following three questions:

1. Provided that after some long time of searching for one's vocation, a person still cannot make a final choice. So, in such situations, the following questions often arise: what to do; what to change; and what is the point in this; in which direction to go next?
2. Provided that one already feels the direction or specific changes that will need to be made in order to enter the path of one's vocation, but at this stage, new questions may arise: is this really God's will; is this way of life or profession really my vocation, or just some momentary desire that prompts me to this or that way of life?
3. And finally, on the condition that a person is already firmly convinced of his or her vocation, to which God himself calls them. That is, these people are certain about their choice, but on the other hand, they may also have the following questions: is this the right moment to follow God's call, or should we wait to be even more certain about our calling?

Undoubtedly, the period of premonition of a vocation is the beginning of work on recognizing

one's vocation. At this stage, a person becomes aware that his life, which he is currently having, somehow does not suit him. Therefore, in this period, there is a desire to find a way of life that would make him happy and that would bring him peace.

This period stimulates a person to make some kind of gift to Christ out of himself, even if he still does not know how to do it. In general, this period of premonition of a calling appears often in everyone. At this very moment, the most important thing for everyone is to get involved in starting the process of recognizing their vocation in themselves.

So, from a spiritual and Christological point of view - when someone notices that he is in this period of premonition of his vocation, he should pay attention to the following things - namely, life events and signs (in order to know your vocation, you must first analyse events and signs, with which one could get some information about the vocation).

The problem of false questions on the path of discerning a vocation is more than relevant to the theological tradition. Researchers rightly draw attention to the fact that on the road to discerning one's vocation, people often put themselves in a state of unnecessary anxiety, asking themselves: "What if...?" So, this type of question "What if...?" brings only confusion and restlessness to the human heart. A classic example of this is when someone asks himself about the choice of his life state, in which there are many uncertainties: "The life of a monk or a married life? It very often happens that a young person does not reckon with what he or she likes, but worries about what will happen if...?" (Kabal hiermonk Anastasii Andrii, 2008, p. 16).

Very interesting and relevant examples of false questions on the way to understanding and accepting one's vocation are given by the Kabal hiermonk Anastasii Andrii, namely:

1. when one half-obviously says to God: "God, I will follow You. But not there and not there!" (that is, this person is already more or less convinced about his vocation, but he asks God to give (I will be a monk if it will be "so and so" or I will start a family if it will be "so and so");
2. or another form of the condition, i.e.: "God, if You do not send me such a woman as I would like, then in such a case, I will go to the mon-

astery";

3. or - "God, if You do not help me to enter this or that educational institution, then, in this case, I will go to the monastery" (Kabal hiermonk Anastasii Andrii, 2008, p. 17).

This is more than a wrong approach to choosing a vocation. It cannot and should not be so.

Summarising the sacred accents of the above, it is worth emphasising the following -

- in order not to make a mistake in choosing one's vocation, one should learn to feel the harmony between desires and life events because a vocation always consists of a constant supernatural desire and life events or signs that were in life and that a specific person is experiencing at this moment. Sometimes events are the opposite of desires (for example, someone wants to be a surgeon but is deathly afraid of blood. Such a person will be a bad surgeon, no matter how much he wants to be a good one because the vital signs contradict his desire).
- it is also worth remembering that charisma (in Christianity, the term charisma means a gift from God; in Church Slavonic and Ukrainian translations of the New Testament and other texts, charisma is usually used interchangeably with the word "grace") is not the most important factor, according to which one needs to determine his or her vocation. Charismas can be helpful in knowing one's vocation, but they are not the most important factors on which to base oneself in discerning one's purpose. It is worth taking time and not waiting for one hundred percent readiness for a certain calling. (Conscious assurance of one hundred percent certainty and identity to enter the path of one's vocation is very rare - claim representatives of theology - in general, all who choose their state of life do not always feel complete certainty about their vocation. This feeling is quite normal, therefore, there is no need to be afraid to take risks). It is worth remembering that it is wrong and unrealistic to believe that there are such instructions with the help of which one can fully know their calling. This is impossible because there are no two similar people in the world. The creator of humans speaks to them personally and in the only possible unique way shows them their individual vocation.
- stepping on the path of one's vocation, the

inner readiness of a person must completely surrender to what the voice of the mental desire. There is also a widespread tendency to consider the phenomenon of vocation from the perspective of a person's life experiences. Thus, S. Dobrow and J. Tosti-Kharas proposed to consider vocation as "an all-encompassing, meaningful passion that people feel in relation to a certain field" (Dobrow, 2011, p. 1003).

To recognize a vocation and follow it unconditionally is the ideal of a Christian understanding of this idea. This is clearly illustrated by many evangelical testimonies, in particular, about the calling of the apostles themselves, where they, hearing Christ's call, immediately followed Him without asking what would happen next or how it would happen. This moment can be seen even more vividly when one of the first apostles asked Christ about where He lives, then Christ did not explain anything to him, only said: "Go and see" (*English Standard Version Bible*, 2001, Jn. 1, 39). Without questions. Without a doubt. Forever. Even more - for ages.

The above-mentioned sacred format of understanding the mystery of vocation sounds somewhat new in the modern version of the pragmatic empirical context of understanding and representation.

Analysing the historiogenesis of the concept of vocation, researchers J. Bunderson and J. Thompson single out three approaches to its interpretation. The classic approach to considering a vocation involves seeing it as a person's vital duty. The neoclassical approach is based on the interpretation of vocation as a source of transcendent meaning, identity and significance, and at the same time as an unwavering duty, sacrifice and vigilance. In contrast to the classical approach, vocation in the neoclassical sense has a secular meaning, that is, it is not based on a person's religious beliefs. The modern approach, while not excluding the interpretation of vocation as a person's duty, shifts the vector of this duty to the person. That is, a person has a duty to fulfil the vocation. For a person, along with the social usefulness of the results of his work from a vocation, his own self-actualization and self-realisation also become important. For example, J. Bunderson and J. Thompson (2009) emphasise that vocation through the prism of the modern approach is characterised as a personal choice,

which people can make as a result of a certain passion or obligation, but definitely not because it was determined that way.

Within the framework of the modern approach, a number of scientists study vocation in the space of human activity. In particular, A. Wrzesniewski et al. (1997) consider the individual's attitude to work as to work, to career and to vocation.

B. J. Dik and R. D. Duffy (2007) consider vocation as a combination of three components - a transcendent vocation that is formed outside of a person; the vital role of a person, which is focused on obtaining a sense of purpose and meaningfulness in work; orientation towards others, i.e. pro-social values of a person are prioritised.

### Empirical Results of the Work

At the beginning of the survey, respondents were asked to provide their own interpretation of the concept of vocation. Analysis of the content of these interpretations revealed several trends. First, some respondents understand vocation as a person's internal motive for activity, self-realisation. This is illustrated by the following answers: an internal inclination to a certain activity or profession; the mental desire, which helps to find the inner self; internal drive, inclination to something; the desire of the soul for something; a previously planned inner drive to something, using which a person can realise himself or herself. At the same time, another part of the students associated the vocation with a certain business, field of activity. This is reflected in their answers: it is a business that a person is good at doing in life; activities that bring pleasure, ensure success and are not imposed by anyone; a hobby or the main activity in life, a passion. This distribution of answers indicates a different time orientation of the content: the first group of answers expresses the perception of a vocation as a life perspective that must be achieved, and the second indicates a vocation as an actual fact, a specific business that a person is engaged in.

Secondly, a different semantic core of the concept of vocation can be traced in the answers of future psychologists. Some of the interviewees associate this concept with abilities, potential, their compliance with the needs of self-development and self-realisation. We have examples of

such answers: a predetermined activity vector corresponding to abilities; a set of abilities, skills and a person's desire to act with an element of intuition; a sphere for the realisation of abilities and oneself; a training ground for success, development of skills; a matter that suits a person as much as possible, in which he or she will reach heights. A significant number of respondents emphasised in their interpretation of vocation its emotional connotation, usually, a positive one (attractiveness, satisfaction). This, for example, is reflected in the following answers: a matter that impresses and interests a person; classes at one's own will; a matter in which a person feels as comfortable and safe as possible; a thing that makes a person happy; the work of life, which brings pleasure. A small number of respondents reflected in the concept of "vocation" an echo of meaning, values, faith, such as: God's appointment, which leads to success; a sense of satisfaction in a certain activity, which becomes the meaning of life; a business that helps a person to be socially significant; a cause for which a person sacrifices his capabilities, strength, meaning of life; the purpose of human birth. This data differs from the views of scholars E. Laguda, K. Ogunyemi, and E. Ohu (2018), who singled out three common elements characterising the vocation phenomenon: a task based on service, a sense of purpose and identity, and a prosocial orientation.

Apart from that, future psychologists perceive vocation in the realm of personal free choice of an attractive trajectory of life self-realisation, rather than social obligation, sacrifice, or innate inclination. This is partly consistent with the opinion of J. S. Bunderson and J. A. Thompson (2009) about a person's choice of a vocation, which he makes following his passion or obligation, that is, the aspect of the certainty of a vocation in advance is devalued.

In addition to that, it was established that the priority aspect of the value of the vocation, in the opinion of the interviewees, is its beneficial effect on the life of the individual, and not social benefit. Moreover, the individual vector of the embodiment of a vocation involves both mental values, such as self-improvement, realisation of personal potential, and vital ones - the achievement of success, status, and well-being. These preferences of the respondents contrast with the results of J. T. Bigham and S. J. Smith's (2008)

study of vocation in the aspect of choosing a teaching profession among students at a Christian university. Interviewed future teachers tend to consider a vocation as any career not motivated by material factors, or an activity aimed at improving society, or the result of the influence of a "higher power" on a person. In its essence, it is an occupation that requires a certain "sacrifice" from the individual.

When asked about in which spheres of a person's life their vocation can be manifested, the respondents' answers reflected an active approach, since the majority of future psychologists (65%) put their profession and hobby first. Also, 35% of respondents noted public activity as a training ground for the realisation of a vocation, and 27% of respondents pointed to training and education as a platform for its realisation. At the same time, only 18% of respondents believe that family relationships can be a field of manifestation of vocation. These answers fully reflect the established public opinion, formulated by the Ukrainian philosopher H. Skovoroda (1994) about congenial work as the only way to happiness.

Answering the question about when people usually begin to realise their vocation, a small majority of respondents were inclined to choose the period of youth (51%). 22% of students believe that adolescence or early adulthood can be favourable periods. Only 11% of respondents consider childhood as a training ground for realising a vocation. It is noteworthy that although 41% of future psychologists emphasised the individual temporal nature of a person's awareness of his vocation, not a single respondent chose the answer option "advanced age". We assume that this may indicate echoes of ageism in the worldview of the interviewees.

The next step of the survey was to find out the opinion of the respondents regarding the influence of the vocation on the quality of a person's life. The analysis of the answers of the interviewees showed that, in general, future psychologists associate vocation with favourable, emotionally positive mental manifestations, since only the answers of two persons appear, conditionally speaking, problematic aspects of this phenomenon - "the mental desire that helps to find oneself" and "the matter, for which a person sacrifices his abilities and strength". More than half of the respondents emphasise that an unreal-

ized vocation can provoke crisis experiences. However, the specific impact of a vocation on the quality of a person's life appears ambiguous in the vision of the students we interviewed: both

as a leading driver of self-realisation, as a source of additional responsibilities, and as a reason for experiencing life crises. The distribution of answers is shown in detail in Table 1.

Table 1.

Impact of Vocation on the Quality of Life

Answer options	The number of respondents' choices* (%)	Ranking position
A discovered and realised vocation contributes to self-realisation and personal development	77	1
An unfulfilled vocation can cause a feeling of desolation and purposelessness of existence	56	2
A person can be successful only thanks to intelligence, will and activity, without a realised vocation	29	3
The realisation of a conscious vocation deprives a person of spontaneity and adds responsibilities	6	4

\*the question allows for selecting multiple answer options at the same time

The established dominant trend in students' views on the positive impact of a realised vocation on the quality of a person's life correlates with the research of scientists B. J. Dik, R. D. Duffy, B. M. Eldridge (2009), which revealed a direct connection between a vocation and a higher level of career and general well-being of a specialist.

It is obvious that the realisation of a vocation is preceded by the process of discovering it, which is influenced by certain factors. The survey was designed to gather information from students about the factors that contribute to finding their calling. It was found that the most influential factor leading the rating was, according to the interviewees, a person's knowledge of his or her talents and abilities (Table 2). This once again emphasises the majority of students' vision

of vocation as a phenomenon of successful realisation of one's personal potential. Formed life goals are in second place, which indicates ambiguous attitudes of the surveyed students. Formed life goals can appear both as a result and as a factor in realising a vocation. The third position of the rating reflected the instrumental factor - developed intelligence and will, which are used by a person in the process of finding a vocation. Thus, the triad of leading factors is concentrated around the individual as the subject of awareness of his or her own vocation, and the support of the environment is inferior to these three factors in the view of the respondents. According to the rating, having a rich life experience is not considered very important and has been ranked fifth. Individual students mentioned faith in God as a source of awareness of their vocation.

Table 2.

Factors of Vocation Awareness

Factors	The number of choices (%)*	Ranking position
Knowledge of one's talents and abilities	71	1
Formed life goals	65	2
Developed intelligence and will	52	3
Support and advice from close friends and family	31	4

Rich life experience	27	5
Faith in God	2	6

\*the question allows for selecting multiple answer options at the same time

In the process of research, it was important to find out the results of reflection by psychology students of their own profession. It was established that the majority of students - 55% believe that they have already realised it. At the same time, only 26% of the future psychologists involved in our research emphasised that they are already mastering the profession that corresponds to their vocation. Instead, 45% of respondents indicated that they are still in the process of searching. The data we obtained correlates with the study of E. Mulyarchuk (2017),

who found that only 25% of the students he interviewed declared that they had a vocation to the chosen teaching profession.

For those students who believe that they have realised their vocation, an additional question was formulated to determine the scope of this vocation. It was shown that a part of the students consider self-development to be the priority direction of their vocation, and slightly fewer respondents chose the field of helping people, which positively correlates with their chosen psychological profession (Fig. 1).

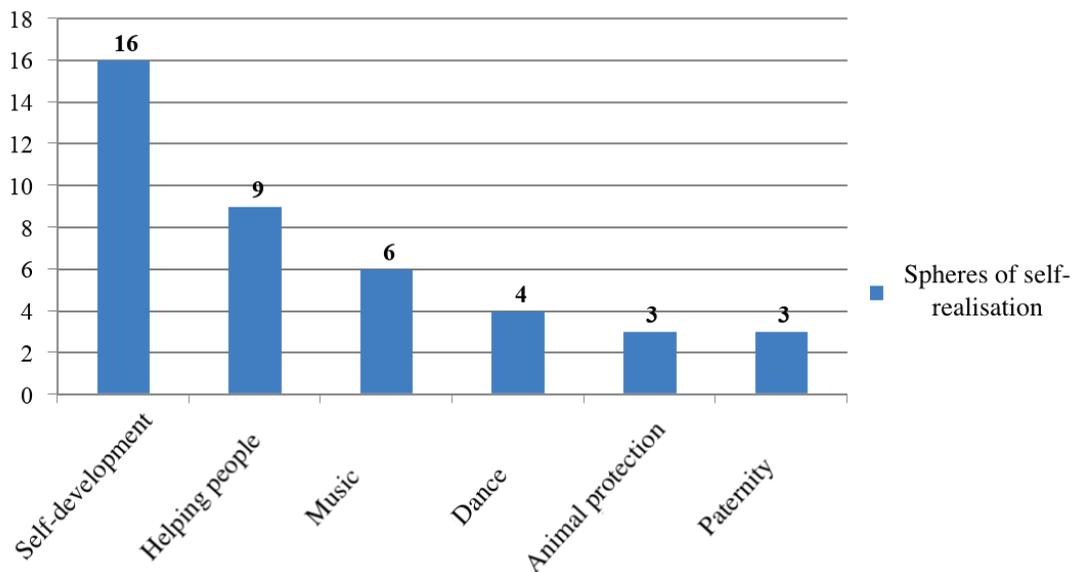


Figure 1. Dominant Spheres of Vocation Implementation (In % of Choices)

Also, in some individual answers of students, such spheres of realisation of their vocation appeared: becoming a manicurist, taking an active part in student self-government, writing poetry, and overcoming illness.

Regarding another sample of students, which was 45%, the question was formulated as whether they take any steps to realise their vocation. A fifth of students answered negatively, that is, they are currently not concerned about finding their own vocation. Suppose that they postponed the process of realising their future for later. Among the descriptions of the 80% of future

psychologists who answered affirmatively, such actions aimed at realising one's vocation, such as self-testing in various fields (30% of choices) and self-education, which were mentioned by 22% of respondents, appeared most often. 11% of students use communication as a means of realising their vocation, and 13% use self-analysis. Individual students mentioned prayers and their own good deeds in their answers (2% each, respectively).

In the process of research, it was important to find out the opinion of the interviewees regarding the influence of society on the processes of

awareness and realisation of vocation by Ukrainians. It was found that the majority of future psychologists place the responsibility for this on the individual, considering the influence of society to be insignificant (Fig. 2). About a fifth of the respondents pointed to the adverse influence of

society, as the instability of the society's development forces a person to think not about a vocation, but about survival. And less than a tenth of students believe that the society helps Ukrainians to realise and implement their vocation through free choice of profession, hobby, and status.

Influence of the society

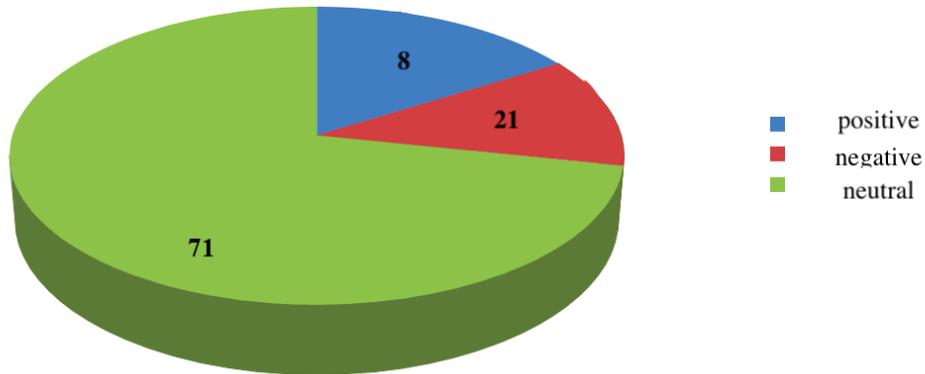


Figure. 2. The Influence of Society on the Awareness and Realisation of a Calling (in %)

Since our respondents were young people in the status of students, it was important to gather their perspectives on the influence of the university environment on the awareness and realisation of a vocation. The answers to this question echo the data presented by us regarding the connection between the vocation of students and

their future professional activities since almost half of the respondents emphasised that the university environment contributes to their awareness and realisation of their vocation through the possibility of acquiring the desired profession or deepening psychological competence (Table 3).

Table 3.

The Influence of the University Environment on the Awareness and Realisation of the Vocation by Students

Aspects of influence	The number of choices (%)*	Ranking position
Assistance through opportunities to acquire a desired speciality or deepen knowledge of psychology	44	1
Vocation is not related to the student status	40	2
Support through the organisation of education and leisure	36	3
Education interferes with the realisation of a vocation	16	4

\*the question allows for selecting multiple answer options at the same time

On the other hand, 40% of respondents pointed out the lack of connection between their professional training and vocation. It is evident that the students' decision to pursue a career in psychology is influenced by external factors. Some

respondents linked their profession to extracurricular education or scientific research, as well as recreational activities hosted within a university environment. It is worth noting that many students believe that pursuing professional

training hinders their ability to pursue their true calling. This can be explained by various factors, for example, an unsuccessfully chosen profession that does not correspond to the potential or expectations of a young person. Or, in the case of alternative spheres of realisation of the vocation (ones different to the field of study), the students' busyness with educational tasks prevents them from doing so.

Taking into account the focus of the respondents' professional training, we included a question about whether psychologists can successfully carry out professional activities if they have

chosen a profession that is not their vocation. Students' answers were different, but almost a quarter of respondents (26%) consider vocation to be the leading factor in the success of a psychologist's professional activity (Table 4). Over half of the respondents hold the opposing position, in their opinion, the lack of a vocation as a motive for a psychologist's activity can be compensated by a sense of duty, responsibility or professional experience. Also, 51% of students are convinced that a vocation realised outside the professional activity of a psychologist can distract from the quality performance of the duties.

Table 4.

The Success of a Psychologist's Activity When Choosing a Profession without a Calling

Answer options	The number of choices (%)*
Is impossible, because a job or occupation by calling will attract more	51
Is impossible, because the work will burden and depress	26
Is possible if the psychologist is guided by a sense of duty and responsibility	23
Is possible if the psychologist gains sufficient professional experience	32
Is possible if the psychologist starts enjoying the professional activity over time	28

\*the question allows for selecting multiple answer options at the same time

Some of the respondents are optimistic, as they believe that the lack of a vocation as a leading motive for choosing a profession as a psychologist will not prevent them from appreciating and enjoying their profession over time and working successfully.

We did not aim to establish a clear differentiation between the categories of vocation and destiny, as some researchers have done. We also recognize that our study can advance the use of standardised diagnostic questionnaires, which will contribute to the collection of valuable empirical material on the relationship of vocation to self-esteem, psychological well-being, etc.

## Conclusion

People are not always aware of their influence on society due to the individual significance of their activity, but they are always the subject of their own life trajectory, which can be built and implemented more effectively, based on a vocation.

The phenomenon of vocation is a significant psychological construct included in the core of an individual's orientation, which becomes a factor in the successful life self-realisation and achievement of psychological well-being. The study of students' views regarding the definition of "vocation" is important, as it opens up the possibility of monitoring and psychological support of their professional formation at the stage of professional training. A well-informed vocation becomes a key to the successful professional self-determination of a young person and a factor in the effectiveness of further professionalisation. It has been established that the students' beliefs regarding their vocation are dominated by the tendency to perceive this phenomenon as an attractive activity that allows them to successfully realise their own potential. The surveyed students place the responsibility for recognising and implementing their vocation on the individual. However, only a fourth of those interviewed admitted that they are mastering a profession that corresponds to their vocation. It has been estab-

lished that about half of future psychologists are in search of their own vocation. Clarifying the future psychologists' understanding of the content and functions of the vocation is important in the context of the prospects of providing psychological assistance to clients with difficulties in professional self-realisation and career building.

The spiritual component of understanding the phenomenon of vocation will always be fundamental, pivotal in significance in the search for one's life path. Empirical studies will always be relevant and necessary, as they sharply emphasise "points of intersection", "points of no return" and the edge of "the ability to start all over again" in one's life, destiny, vocation.

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