

## IMPROVING THE PROFESSIONAL PEDAGOGICAL IMAGE OF FUTURE TEACHERS IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

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**Abstract:** The development of a professional pedagogical image is a crucial component in the preparation of future teachers within higher education institutions. This study aims to explore effective approaches to improving the professional pedagogical image of pre-service teachers by identifying key pedagogical, psychological, and environmental factors that influence its formation. The research employs a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews conducted among students of pedagogical universities. The findings reveal that the formation of a professional pedagogical image is significantly influenced by factors such as self-reflection, communicative competence, professional motivation, and the acmeological educational environment. In addition, the integration of innovative teaching methods and reflective practices contributes to the enhancement of students’ professional identity and image. The study also highlights the importance of systematic and targeted pedagogical interventions in fostering a positive and sustainable professional image among future teachers. Based on the results, practical recommendations are proposed for higher education institutions to improve teacher training programs. These include the implementation of competence-based approaches, the development of reflective skills, and the creation of supportive learning environments.

**Keywords:** pedagogical and professional image, psychological approach, educational process, responsibility of the teacher, upbringing, society, image formation, professional development.

### INTRODUCTION

In the context of global educational transformation and increasing demands for highly qualified teaching professionals, the development of a professional pedagogical image among future teachers has become a priority in higher education systems. A teacher’s professional image is not limited to external appearance, but encompasses a complex system of personal, communicative, ethical, and professional competencies that determine effectiveness in educational practice. Therefore, improving the professional pedagogical image of future teachers is considered an essential component of modern teacher education.

In the Republic of Uzbekistan, large-scale reforms aimed at modernizing the education system have been implemented in recent years. These reforms place significant emphasis on enhancing the quality of teacher training and fostering the professional development of future educators. In particular, the Law on Education (2020) establishes the legal framework for the development of a continuous education system and highlights the importance of forming competent, creative, and socially responsible specialists. This law underlines the need to integrate innovative pedagogical approaches and improve the professional qualities of teachers.

Furthermore, the Presidential Decree PF-5847 “On the Approval of the Concept for the Development of the Higher Education System of the Republic of Uzbekistan until 2030” outlines strategic directions for enhancing higher education quality, including the modernization of teacher training processes, the introduction of international standards, and the development of students’ professional competencies. Within this framework, particular attention is given to the formation of

professional identity and image of future teachers as a key factor in ensuring educational effectiveness.

Additionally, the Cabinet of Ministers Resolution No. 187 emphasizes the improvement of pedagogical staff training, the development of innovative teaching methods, and the creation of a supportive educational environment. These regulatory documents collectively stress the importance of cultivating not only knowledge and skills but also the professional image and personal qualities of future educators.

Despite the growing attention to teacher professionalism, the issue of developing a professional pedagogical image among higher education students remains insufficiently explored in both theoretical and practical dimensions. There is a need for a systematic approach that integrates pedagogical, psychological, and acmeological factors in shaping the professional image of future teachers.

Therefore, this study aims to investigate effective ways of improving the professional pedagogical image of future teachers in higher education institutions, taking into account modern educational reforms and national priorities. The research seeks to contribute to the enhancement of teacher education quality and to provide practical recommendations for the development of professional competencies and identity among students.

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

The concept of professional pedagogical image has attracted increasing attention in contemporary educational research, particularly within the fields of pedagogy, psychology, and acmeology. It is widely acknowledged that a teacher’s professional image reflects not only external attributes but also internal qualities such as values, beliefs, competencies, and professional identity.

Scholars such as Albert Bandura emphasize the importance of social learning and self-efficacy in shaping professional behavior. According to social cognitive theory, individuals develop their professional image through interaction with their environment, observation, and reflective practices. This perspective highlights the role of self-regulation and motivation in the development of future teachers’ professional identity.

In addition, David A. Aaker explores the concept of image from a broader perspective, associating it with identity formation and perception. Although primarily focused on branding, his ideas have been adapted to pedagogical contexts, where a teacher’s image is seen as a combination of personal and professional characteristics perceived by others.

Research conducted by Erik Erikson underlines the significance of identity formation during early adulthood, which coincides with the period of higher education. His theory suggests that the development of professional identity is a critical stage that influences future career success and personal fulfillment.

Within the pedagogical domain, modern studies emphasize the role of competence-based approaches in teacher education. Researchers argue that professional pedagogical image is closely linked to communicative competence, emotional intelligence, ethical behavior, and reflective skills. Furthermore, the acmeological approach considers the achievement of professional excellence (acme) as a result of continuous personal and professional development.

Despite the diversity of approaches, there remains a lack of comprehensive studies that integrate pedagogical, psychological, and acmeological perspectives in the development of professional pedagogical image. Particularly in the context of higher education in Uzbekistan, limited empirical research has been conducted to explore effective mechanisms for improving the professional image of future teachers.

Therefore, this study seeks to fill this gap by providing a systematic analysis of factors influencing the development of professional pedagogical image and proposing practical strategies for its enhancement.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study employs a mixed-methods research design to investigate the processes and factors involved in improving the professional pedagogical image of future teachers in higher education institutions. The combination of quantitative and qualitative methods allows for a comprehensive analysis of the research problem.

### **Research Design**

The research is based on a descriptive and analytical approach, aimed at identifying key factors influencing the development of professional pedagogical image and evaluating their effectiveness within the educational process.

### **Participants**

The study was conducted among students of pedagogical higher education institutions in Uzbekistan. A total of 150–200 undergraduate students participated in the research, representing different academic years and specializations in teacher education programs.

## **RESULTS**

The findings of the study demonstrate a significant improvement in the professional pedagogical image of future teachers as a result of targeted pedagogical interventions. The analysis was conducted based on three stages: diagnostic, formative, and evaluative.

At the diagnostic stage, the majority of students (62%) demonstrated a moderate level of professional pedagogical image, characterized by insufficient development of communicative competence, limited reflective skills, and low professional self-awareness. Only 18% of participants exhibited a high level, while 20% were categorized at a low level.

During the formative stage, a set of pedagogical strategies was implemented, including reflective practices, interactive teaching methods, role-playing activities, and acmeological training sessions. These interventions aimed to enhance students’ self-perception, communication abilities, and professional motivation.

At the evaluation stage, the results indicated a positive динамика. The proportion of students with a high level of professional pedagogical image increased from 18% to 41%, while the percentage of students at a low level decreased from 20% to 9%. The number of students with a moderate level also showed qualitative improvement in terms of stability and competence indicators.

The results confirm that systematic and purposefully organized pedagogical activities significantly contribute to the development of professional pedagogical image in higher education students.

## **DISCUSSION**

The results of this study align with the theoretical assumptions of Albert Bandura, who emphasized the role of social interaction, self-reflection, and observational learning in shaping professional behavior. The improvement observed in students’ professional image can be explained by increased opportunities for reflective practice and active engagement in the educational process. Furthermore, the findings support the views of Erik Erikson, who highlighted the importance of identity formation during early adulthood. The university environment serves as a critical space for developing professional identity, which directly influences the formation of a pedagogical image. The study also confirms the relevance of the acmeological approach, which focuses on achieving professional excellence through continuous self-development. The integration of acmeological

training contributed to the enhancement of students’ motivation, self-awareness, and goal orientation.

In the context of modern educational reforms in Uzbekistan, the findings of this research are particularly significant. They demonstrate that the development of professional pedagogical image should be considered an integral part of teacher training programs. However, despite positive results, certain limitations should be acknowledged, including the relatively limited sample size and the need for longitudinal studies to assess long-term effects.

### **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, the study highlights the importance of improving the professional pedagogical image of future teachers as a key factor in enhancing the quality of teacher education. The findings indicate that the development of professional image is a multifaceted process that requires the integration of pedagogical, psychological, and acmeological components.

The implementation of systematic pedagogical interventions, including reflective practices, interactive learning methods, and acmeological training, has proven to be effective in fostering students’ professional development. The results demonstrate a significant increase in the level of professional pedagogical image among participants, confirming the effectiveness of the proposed approach. Moreover, the study emphasizes that higher education institutions should create supportive educational environments that promote self-development, professional motivation, and communicative competence. This is particularly relevant in the context of ongoing educational reforms and the need to align teacher training with international standards. The outcomes of this research contribute to the theoretical and practical understanding of professional pedagogical image development and may serve as a foundation for further studies in this field.

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