

# Analysis of the Formation of Personal and Professional Qualities of Future Social Workers for Street Social Work

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**Abstract:** The paper presents the diagnostics of the state of formation of personal and professional qualities of future social workers being able to carry out street social work. While undergoing the study, it has been found that the professional readiness of street social work specialists involves the formation of such a level of professional skills and competence of future social workers that will allow them to perform the various functions of street social work successfully. Interpersonal interaction with clients of street social work provides for the presence of such specialists' traits as: empathy, compromise and speed of thinking, diplomacy in relations with others, optimism in perception of reality, communicativeness, sociability, high mental capacity, comprehensiveness of interests, mood stability, independence, initiative and business orientation in professional activity. To study the state of formation of the listed qualities of future social workers, we conducted a diagnostic study among students of second-fifth years-of-study of specialty "Social work" of Khmelnytsky National University. Diagnostic results show that the majority of future social workers, while studying in higher educational institution, have sufficiently low indicators of formation of both personal and professional qualities. They are diagnosed with low levels of business orientation and professional motivation for street social work, as well as low level of manifestation of diplomacy, pessimism in the perception of reality, rigid thinking, low mental capacity, changeability of interests, multilevel of mood, dependency, lack of initiative. Therefore, we propose to develop and introduce psychological-pedagogical and social-pedagogical conditions (for the formation of future social workers' professional readiness for street social work) into the educational process.

**Keywords:** *street social work; future social workers; personal and professional qualities; diagnostics; higher educational institution.*

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## 1. Introduction

### *1.1. The problem of study*

According to the UN, there are around 100 million homeless people and about 1 billion people living in unsuitable and poor conditions. Unfortunately, people who sleep on the streets, at the entrances of houses, in the attics, the cellars, etc., are a common attribute of Ukraine today. The experience of losing home cannot be compared to any other loss, even such as the loss of property and work. For every normal person, the depressed psychological state associated with the loss of a roof over his head equates to the catastrophe that destroys his basic needs. Having found himself on the street, a homeless person becomes a victim of personal degradation. He is still strong enough to be poverty-stricken physically and morally, but he has not enough efforts to fight for a better life. In this regard, there is a need to satisfy and meet the basic needs of the person in the period of his staying “on the street” by providing him with social-pedagogical, social-psychological, social-legal, medical-social support. This is what street social work is all about.

The professional training of street social work specialists in Ukraine, for its part, aims to ensure such a level of professional competence of future social workers that will allow them to perform various functions of street social work successfully, namely: to identify (in the area of social services for family) individual citizens, children and teenagers, who are in need of social, medical, legal, psychological, pedagogical and material assistance; to analyze and predict the possibilities of providing social services to their clients; to improve technologies and methods of street social work, etc. But for that to happen, the specialists should possess the following personal and professional qualities: sensitiveness and kindness, diplomacy in relations with others, self-confidence, non-conformism, optimism in perception of reality, responsibility, sociability, empathy, high mental capacity, comprehensiveness of interests, initiative, professional motivation and passion for the process of professional activity.

In view of the above, the formation of the readiness of future social workers for street social work should be one of the priority areas of their professional training in higher educational institutions.

## ***1.2. Literature review***

Bodelan, 2016; Vainola, 2008; Zaitsevskaya, 1999; Tarasenko, 2011; Holostova, 2009 deal with the applied aspects of street social work as an integral part of social work.

Scientific researches by Vydyshko, 2010; Vinnikova, 2003; Haiduk, 2005; Zahaiko, 2008; Kulikova, 2009; Leshchuk, 2009; Mikitenko, 2006; Olkhovych, 2008; Pichkar, 2002; Slozanska, 2011; Sobchak, 2004 are devoted to the disclosure of theoretical and practical bases of social workers' training in the USA, Canada, Australia and Western European countries.

Some scholars focus their attention on the conditionality to provide social services, namely; forming the readiness of future social workers for various types of professional activity (Bodnaruk, 2015; Voloshenko, 2016; Hodlevska, 2007; Hordieieva, 2015; Patynok, 2008; Savitska, 2015; Surhova, 2012).

The researchers E. Unguru & A. Sandu point to the need to create a favorable work environment in which social work specialists would be able to integrate dynamic theoretical training and professional practice (E. Unguru & A. Sandu, 2018; 2019).

The scientists I. Zimnya (Zimnya, 1995), N. Klimenyuk (Klimenyuk, 2007), E. Holostova (Holostova, 2009) express their own positions regarding the professional and personal qualities, required for the social worker to carry out street social work. These qualities can be systematized by several stages: operational, functional, strategic and personal. It is these stages that determine the generalized professional portrait of the social work specialist, which is appropriate to the level of culture of modern society; the level of development of social work as a professional activity as a whole; the requirements for the qualification of the social work specialist, defined by the International Declaration of Ethical Principles of Social Work, International Ethical Standards for Social Work, the Code of the National Association of Social Workers, as well as the needs of state and non-state social services.

Let's consider the meaningful characteristics of these stages:

– operational – is due to the requirements for rapid response to the change of professional situation, foresees the availability of the specialist's appropriate education and general culture, competence in solving various social problems, awareness in the field of pedagogy, psychology, law, medicine, etc. (Klimenyuk, 2007);

– functional – is ensured by the presence of the social worker's culture of interpersonal communication; skills to optimize communication

with the clients, representatives of different social groups; ability to coordinate social links and relations; facilitation skills; ability to interact with different clients on the basis of observation and selection of socially relevant information (Zimnya, 1995);

– strategic – is conditioned by the need to organize socially significant activities among the population, coordinate the social and legal protection of clients' interests and ensure management decisions aimed at achieving long-term strategic goals (Zimnya, 1995);

– personal – foresees that the social worker has psychophysiological and psychological qualities that determine his or her professional orientation to social work and professional suitability for it (Holostova, 2009).

However, despite the constant increase in the number of clients of street social work and the need for purposeful formation of professional readiness, professional competence, personal and professional traits of future social workers for this work, this problem still remains out of the attention by the vast majority of domestic scientists.

### ***1.3. The purpose of the study***

The purpose of the paper is to analyze the formation of personal and professional qualities of future social workers for street social work at the stage of their studying in higher educational institution.

## **2. Methodology**

### ***2.1. Research methods***

The following methods were used in the study:

1. Theoretical methods (analysis, synthesis, comparison, generalization, systematization of scientific researches on the problem of future social workers' readiness for street social work).

2. Empirical methods (method "Diagnosis of interpersonal relations" (T. Leary, G. Leforz, R. Sazek); method "16 RF-questionnaire" (R. Kettell); method "Assessment of sociability level" (V. Ryakhovsky); method "Diagnosis of personality orientation by B. Bass" (V. Smekal, M. Kucher).

3. Methods of mathematical processing of the recent study results.

### ***2.2 Research procedure***

The experimental study of the state of professional readiness of future social workers for street social work was conducted at Khmel'nitsky National University. Full-time students of second – fifth years-of-study of specialty "Social work", aged 18-23 (in total – 60 people) were selected for it.

Participants of the experiment provided their verbal (oral) consent to conduct the diagnostic study and process information without disclosing personal information about them. The methodologies used in the study are reliable, valid and freely available. All the questionnaires were completed by the students out-of-school time.

The first method used in our study was “Diagnosis of interpersonal relationships” (T. Leary, G. Leforge, R. Sazek) (Sobchik, 1990), which allowed us to determine the characteristics of students that are manifested (in the process of interpersonal interaction by such factors, as “dominance – submission” and “friendliness – aggressiveness”) and evaluated according to the following tendencies: dominance, self-confidence, infallibility, independence, dependence, lack of confidence, sociability, sensitiveness.

The tendencies “friendliness” and “sensitiveness” were of the greatest interest in the framework of our study. According to each tendency, students were required to rate the 16 proposed statements and mark with “+” those that corresponded to their self-image, and with “-” those that did not. There was 1 point for each “+” answer, 0 point for each “-” answer.

So, for the sum of points received we made the following conclusions:

1. The tendency “friendliness”:

– 9-16 points – the student is friendly, kind to everyone; focused on acceptance and social approval; seeks to satisfy the demands of everybody; adheres to the goals of microgroups; has advanced displacement mechanisms; emotionally labile;

– 0-8 points – student is prone to cooperation, collaboration; flexible and finds compromise in solving problems in conflict situations; seeks to be in mutual understanding with others, tries to help, feel himself into the spotlight, deserve recognition and love; consciously conformal; adheres to the rules and principles of etiquette in dealing with people; initiative to achieve the goals of the group; sociable; friendly in relationships.

2. The tendency “sensitiveness”:

– 9-16 points – student is hyperresponsive; always sacrifices his interests; seeks to help and sympathize everybody; obsessive in helping; too active in comparison with others; accepts responsibility for others;

– 0-8 points – student is responsible towards people; delicate, soft, kind, selfless, sensitive; shows emotional attitude to people in compassion, sympathy, concern; knows how to encourage and reassure others.

The next method “16 RF Questionnaires” (R. Kettell) (Kapustina, 2001), used in the study, provides universal, practical, and multidimensional information about the identity of the future social worker. It allowed us to

identify a number of personal qualities of the student by the following factors: seclusion – sociability (factor A), low intelligence – high intelligence (factor B), emotional sustainability – emotional unsustainability (factor C), subordination – dominance (factor E), restraint – expressiveness (factor F), subordination to feelings – high normativity of behavior (factor G), indecision – boldness (factor H), cruelty – sensitivity (factor I), credulity – suspicion (factor L), practicality – developed imagination (factor M), straightforwardness – diplomacy (factor N), self-confidence – anxiety (factor O), conservatism – radicalism (factor Q1), conformism – non-conformism (factor Q2), low self-control – high self-control (factor Q3), relaxation (factor Q4), self-esteem adequacy (factor MD).

According to this method, a series of questions corresponded to each of these factors. Each question had three proposed options for answers a), b), c). Students had to choose one of them by marking with “+”. Students' answers were correlated with the key.

In our study, it was necessary to identify such personal qualities of future social workers as: factor N (straightforwardness – diplomacy), factor O (confidence – anxiety), factor F (restraint – expressiveness), factors B (low intelligence – high intelligence), C (emotional sustainability – emotional unsustainability), Q1 (conservatism – radicalism), Q2 (conformism – nonconformism).

With the help of the third method “Assessment of the sociability level” (V. Ryakhovsky) (Rogov, 1999), we determined the level of communication of future social workers. According to it, students had to answer 16 proposed questions and put scores using the scale: 2 – “yes”, 1 – “sometimes”, 0 – “no”. The total points were then calculated and the level of communication for each student was revealed:

– 30-32 points indicate a complete lack of communication skills. Such student is not sociable, unable to cope with group tasks, work in the team, etc.;

– 25-29 points show seclusion. Such student prefers loneliness, and new work and the need for new contacts bring him off balance;

– 19-24 points characterize the average level of communication. Such student is sociable and feels quite confident in an unfamiliar environment;

– 14-18 points indicate a sufficient level of communication. Such student is inquisitive, listens to an interesting interlocutor eagerly, sufficiently patient in communication, able to defend his views;

– 9-13 points indicate a high level of communication. Such student is very sociable (sometimes even excessively), likes to speak on various issues

and can cause annoyance of interlocutors, willing to meet new people, likes to be into the spotlight. At the same time, he lacks the endurance, patience, and courage to deal with serious problems;

– 4-8 points characterize the excessive level of communication. Such student is very inquisitive, loves to participate in all discussions, takes the floor on any issue willingly, even if he has a superficial idea about it, which causes interlocutors' annoyance;

– 3-0 points indicate “overcommunication”. Such student is very talkative, verbose, interferes in matters that are not relevant to him, takes to judge problems in which he is not competent. As a result, it causes a variety of conflicts with others.

The last method used in our study was “Diagnosis of personality orientation by B. Bass” (V. Smekal, M. Kucher) (Bass, 1999). With its help, we identified that students had the dominance of such types of orientation as personal (self-directed), business (focus on business) and collaboration (focus on communication). The above method is based on the respondent's reactions to certain situations related to the work or participation of other people in these situations. According to the method, future social workers had to choose answers to the 30 proposed statements of the questionnaire. There were two variants of answers: “most of all” or “least”. Students' answers were correlated with the key. Then, we calculated the sum of points for each type of orientation, as well as the total amount of points, which should be equal to 90. The obtained result characterized the dominance of a certain type of student orientation.

### **3. Research results**

As noted above, the first method used in our study was “Diagnosis of interpersonal relationships” (T. Leary, G. Leforge, R. Sazek) (Sobchik, 1990). With its help, we diagnosed such important qualities of future social workers as friendliness and sensitiveness. The results of its implementation showed that the tendency “friendliness” was distributed as follows: 42 (70%) students had a tendency to cooperate, and 18 (30%) were friendly. These data indicate that most students seek understanding with others in conflict situations without displaying aggression and insults. The results of the diagnosis of the tendency “sensitiveness” were quite interesting, because they showed that 36 (60%) students were characterized by the responsibility, and the hyperresponsibility was common for 24 (40%) of them. These data indicate that most students show compassion, sympathy, concern for others.

The analysis of the results of the method “Diagnosis of interpersonal relationships” (T. Leary, G. Leforge, R. Sazek) is given in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Results of the study of the qualities of future social workers by the method “Diagnosis of interpersonal relations” (T. Leary, G. Leforz, R. Sazek)

Tendency	#	%	#	%
Friendliness	tendency to cooperate		Benevolence	
	42	70	18	30
Sensitiveness	Responsibility		Hyperresponsibility	
	36	60	24	40

The results of the study of the personal qualities of future social workers by the method “16 RF-questionnaire” (R. Kettell) (Kapustina, 2001) showed that the majority of students had a low level of diplomacy – factor N (70%). However, the results of the research on the factor O “self-confidence – anxiety” revealed that such qualities of personality as cold-bloodedness, carelessness, safety, self-confidence (80%) were inherent for the vast majority of students.

In turn, analysis of the diagnostic data of Factor F “restraint – expressiveness” showed that 28 (46.7%) students had such personal traits as carefulness, disturbance, thoughtfulness, pessimism about perception of reality, whereas 32 (53.3%) ) students were impulsive, energetic, emotional, dynamic.

The results of the study of the factor B “low intelligence – high intelligence” showed that 38 (63.3%) students were characterized by such features as concreteness, rigidity, emotional disorganization of thinking, low mental abilities and so on. And only 22 (36.7%) students were characterized by levelheadedness, ingenuity, abstract thinking, ability to learn quickly.

According to the results of the diagnosis of the following factor C, “emotional sustainability – emotional unsustainability” we revealed that 43 (71.7%) students had such personal traits as subordination to feelings, changeability of interests, multilevel of mood, irritability, etc. And only 17 (28.3%) of students showed restraint, hard work, emotional maturity.

Data analysis of the study of factor Q1 “conservatism – radicalism” showed that 36 (60%) future social workers were characterized by analytical

thinking, tolerance for inconvenience, and 24 (40%) students – by conservative thinking, resistance to typical difficulties.

Regarding the factor Q2 “conformism – non-conformism”, we found that 44 (73.3%) students were characterized by independence and lack of initiative, and only 16 (26.7%) students showed independence from the group, ingenuity, autonomy in decision-making.

The results of diagnosing the personal qualities of future social workers by the method “16 RF-questionnaire” (R. Kettell) are shown in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Results of the study of the personal qualities of future social workers by the method “16 RF-questionnaire” (R. Kettell)

Factor	Levels		
	High		Low
	#	%	#
Straightforwardness – diplomacy (factor N)	18	30	42
Self confidence – anxiety (factor O))	12	20	48
Restraint –expressiveness (Factor F)	32	53,3	28
Low intelligence – high intelligence (factor B))	22	36,7	38
Emotional sustainability – emotional unsustainability (factor C)	17	28,3	43
Conservatism – radicalism (factor Q1)	36	60	24
Conformism – Nonconformism ( factor Q2)	16	26,7	44

Using the method “Assessment of the sociability level” (V. Ryakhovsky) (Rogov, 1999), we found that the majority of future social workers had a high level of communication (51.7%). In turn, a sufficient level of communication was available for 16.7% of students, and an average level – for 13.3% of the researched ones.

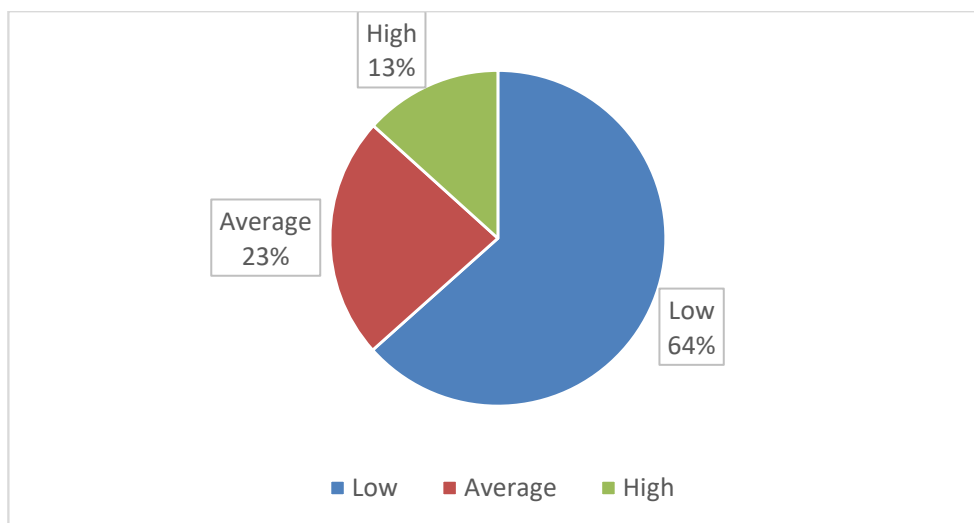
It is worth to note that 15% of future social workers, diagnosed by us, have an extremely high level of communication and 3.3% of students possess a low level of communication.

The results of the study by the method “Assessment of the sociability level” (V. Ryakhovsky) are shown in Table 3.

**Table 3.** The results of the study of communicative abilities of future social workers by the method “Assessment of the sociability level” (V. Ryakhovsky)

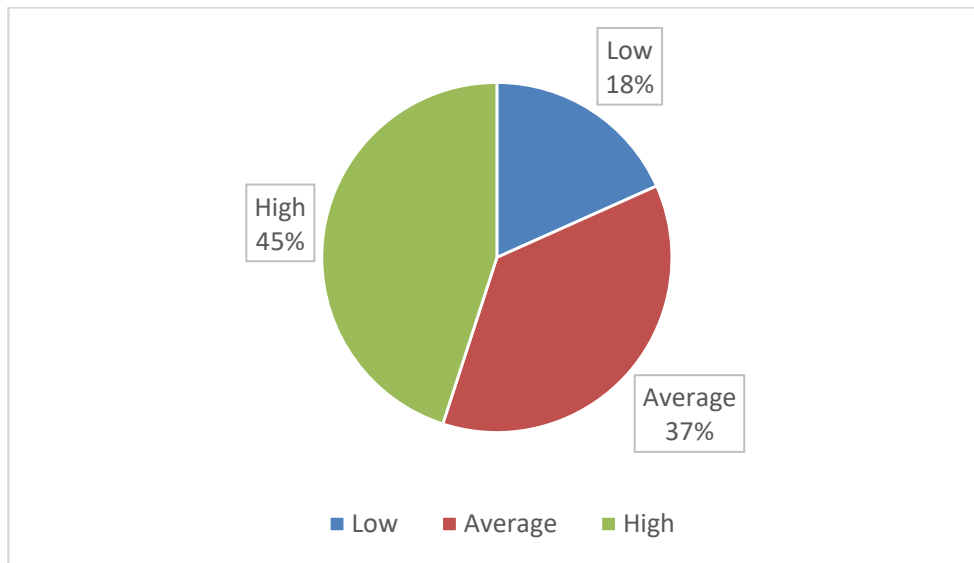
	#	%
Level of manifestation		
Total lack of communication skills	0	0
Low communication	2	3,3
Average level of communication	8	13,3
Adequate level of communication	10	16,7
High level of communication	31	51,7
Excessive communication	9	15
Overcommunication level	0	0

Using the last method “Diagnosis of personality orientation by B. Bass” (V. Smekal, M. Kucher) (Bass, 1999), we found that future social workers had a low level of business orientation (64%), which, unfortunately, indicated their low professional motivation, lack of enthusiasm for the process of activity and focus on business cooperation.



**Figure 1.** Levels of expression of future social workers' business orientation (in%)

In turn, the results of the study of personal orientation showed that students were dominated by motives for their own well-being and prestige (Figure 2).



**Figure 2.** Levels of expression of future social workers' personal orientation (in%)

Thus, the analysis of the results of the diagnostic study showed that the vast majority of future social workers found a compromise in solving problems in conflict situations and sought understanding with others. At the same time, they were dominated by low levels of diplomacy manifestation. Also, 80% of students had a low level of "self-confidence – anxiety", which indicated that they had such features as cold-bloodedness, carelessness, security, self-confidence. This is confirmed by the fact that the majority of students (64%) showed a low level of business orientation, which indicated their lack of motivation for professional activity, in general, and for street social work, in particular.

The results of the study show clearly that there is the need to develop and substantiate effective methods and means of enhancing the level of professional readiness of future social workers for street social work in the process of their professional training in higher educational institution.

In our opinion, the following methods and means of raising the professional readability level of future social workers for street social work in

the process of their professional training at higher educational institution are effective:

1. Organization of professional preparation of students for street social work on the basis of interaction and motivation of students to carry out street social work on the ethical basis. That's why, we propose to develop and implement the special course "Street Social Work: Theory and Practice" into the educational process of higher educational institutions, the main objectives of which should be:

- disclosure of the nature and specifics of street social work;
- familiarizing students with the basic methods, forms, technologies and techniques of street social work;
- formation of students' ideas about professional and personal qualities of the street social worker, his/her functional competence;
- introducing students to social organizations with which street social workers collaborate.

2. Facilitation support for students' professional preparation for performing street social work functions, organization of students' professional preparation for street social work on the basis of interaction, and gaining practical experience of street social work. This is facilitated by practical workshops addressing common problems faced by the street social worker in the course of the professional activity. That's why, the teacher should formulate a series of questions that students will be asked in a specific sequence:

1) general questions that stimulate the thinking of each student, such as: What is a neighborhood? What do you know about neighborhood infrastructure? What are the functions of the street social worker in the neighborhood?

2) direct questions aimed at engaging future social workers in discussing material on the topic of the lesson and are relevant to each student personally. For example, the following questions might be: What infrastructure has the neighborhood in which you live? Is there an area of danger for children in your neighborhood? Can you call your neighborhood criminal?

3) direct questions aimed at receiving direct feedback from students that provide an analysis of specific problem situations, such as: What criminal events occurred in your neighborhood? Have there been any cases in your neighborhood where the participation of residents helped to solve a particular problem? Why are some neighborhoods considered as criminogenic?

4) factual questions that allow to determine the level of students' knowledge, for example: What problems should the street social worker solve in the neighborhood? What should the street social worker take into account while performing his/her functional responsibilities in the neighborhood? What is a danger for the street social worker in the neighborhood?

5) redirected questions that encourage the exchange of views between future social workers, namely: What security rules should the street social worker follow when performing his/her functions in the neighborhood? What is the safest winter and summer time for street social work in the neighborhood? What should the street social worker do in an emergency?

6) guiding questions that foresee the facilitation of control and acceptance of "self-responsibility" by students, for example: List the problems that street social workers may face in their neighborhood. What are the rules for working in the neighborhood?

All students' answers should be recorded and the most correct answers (according to students' opinions), should be identified in the discussion process.

3. Motivation of students to conduct street social work on the ethical basis and gain practical experience of street social work. In our opinion, this is facilitated by the Case-study practice, which has a lot in common with the game learning, since it involves a similar form of student work. The tasks of the case-study are to teach students to cope with unique and untypical situations inherent in real street social work, to develop their decision-making skills and so on. For example, the teacher gives students the task to seek help from a family of two parents and two children, ages 3 and 9, who are internally displaced persons. Next, students should be divided into four groups: the first group is formed by social educators; the second one – school psychologists; the third one – lawyers providing consultations in territorial centers; the fourth one – street social workers. The task for each group of students should be the same, but it must be done from the point of view of certain specialists: think and list the problems of the family, which can be solved by the specialist, the profession of which you represent; select the two most significant problems of these ones; make a plan for each of them. After completing this task, each group of specialists presents the plans. The students are then grouped together to develop a brochure for the street social worker, outlining the general directions of his/her activities with the specified category of street social work clients.

## 4. Conclusions

### 4.1. *Final Conclusions*

Thus, the analysis of the results of the conducted diagnostic research have shown that future social workers, studying at higher educational institution, have rather low indicators of the formation of both personal and professional qualities. Thus, according to the results of the research it is found that the majority of students of the specialty “social work” seek to understand others in conflict situations, show compassion, sympathy, concern towards others. At the same time, they have a low level of diplomacy manifestation, pessimistic perception of reality, rigid thinking, low mental capacity, changeability of interests, multilevel of mood, dependency and lack of initiative. Also, 3.3% of students have extremely low levels of communication and sociability as important indicators of personal and professional qualities.

However, the worst indicator found in our experiment study was that 64% of future social workers were diagnosed with low levels of business orientation and professional involvement in street social work. Instead, the overwhelming majority of students have a tendency to secure their own well-being, prestige, and they consider their future professional activity only as an opportunity to satisfy their demands.

### 4.2. *Research prospects*

In view of the results of the study, the prospects for further implementation in this direction are seen in the development and substantiation of psychological-pedagogical and social-pedagogical conditions for the formation of future social workers' professional readiness for street social work in the process of their studying at higher educational institution.

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