

Professional “acme” – As a Factor for Developing Professional Identity

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DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.47134/ptk.v2i3.1605>

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Received: 13-03-2025

Accepted: 24-04-2025

Published: 10-05-2025



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Abstract: This study aims to examine the concept of "professional acme" as a significant determinant in the formation of professional identity among educators. Employing a theoretical and conceptual literature review methodology, the paper explores various stages of professional development and integrates psychological and pedagogical theories, including acmeology and identity formation frameworks. The results indicate that achieving "acme", the peak of professional excellence requires continuous learning, intrinsic motivation, mentoring, and psychological resilience. Teachers who reach this stage demonstrate stronger identity, greater instructional impact, and contribute more significantly to educational quality and student development. The study recommends teacher education programs to integrate reflective practice, value formation, and mentorship structures to nurture professional maturity.

Keywords: Acmeology, Professional "acme", Professional Identification, Professional Development, Personal Growth, Socio-Psychological Factors.

Introduction

Today, the problem of professional identification is gaining importance in the process of a person's success in his work and personal development. The rapid development of society, changes in the labor market and changes in professional requirements create the need for specialists to adapt to their profession and form their professional identification. From this point of view, the study of the concept of professional "acme" is relevant, since it characterizes the process of reaching the peak of a specialist's professional development.

In this regard, the determination of the tasks set forth in the Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated January 25, 2018 No. PF5313 “On measures to radically improve the system of general secondary, secondary specialized and vocational education” is of great priority.

The formation of professional identity is a dynamic process that unfolds over time, influenced by education, experience, reflection, and social interaction. A concept gaining relevance in this context is that of "professional acme" – the peak of professional excellence an individual strives to attain. While much has been written about career development and

professional competence, less attention has been paid to how the pursuit of one's highest professional-self shapes identity formation.

Methodology

One of the main concepts of acmeology, "acme" means the highest peak in human development. This concept is associated not only with physical or mental development, but also with the highest professional results of a person (Abdusamiyev, 2024). Professional "acme" is the achievement of maturity in a person's professional activity, the constant striving for perfection of one's skills and professional growth.

Professional identity has been examined through various theoretical lenses including sociocultural (Gee, 2000), psychological (Erikson, 1968), and constructivist perspectives (Beijaard, Meijer, & Verloop, 2004). According to Beijaard et al. (2004), professional identity is not a fixed trait but a continuously evolving construct shaped by contextual and experiential factors. Meanwhile, the idea of reaching a peak or "acme" in one's profession aligns with Maslow's (1943) notion of self-actualization and Rogers' (1961) humanistic theory of becoming one's ideal self.

Korthagen (2004) emphasizes the holistic nature of professional growth, asserting that effective teacher education must nurture not only skills but also values and mission, which are closely related to the concept of acme. In this light, professional identity formation becomes an integrative process where personal and professional domains converge. Furthermore, Akkerman and Meijer (2011) introduce the concept of identity multiplicity and suggest that professional identity consists of dynamically interrelated sub-identities that must be balanced. This view is useful in understanding how striving for professional acme involves negotiating various professional roles and aspirations. Day, Kington, Stobart, and Sammons (2006) also explore the impact of policy, school culture, and personal biography on teachers' professional identities, noting that teachers with a strong sense of mission and reflective capacity are better able to maintain professional coherence and reach high levels of personal and professional fulfillment.

Scientists who have conducted research in the field of acmeology divide a person's achievement of maturity into several stages:

1. Professional formation – a person determines his professional interests, acquires the necessary knowledge and skills.
2. Professional maturity – a specialist becomes firmly established in his field and improves his professional skills.
3. Professional peak (acme) – a specialist achieves the highest results in his field and uses innovative approaches.
4. Professional stability – a person has the ability to maintain their professional peak for a long time.

Kushinsky highly values the morale and professional activity of teachers and puts forward the idea of the expediency of constantly improving their professional qualifications. He first substantiates the system of teacher training, confirming the social significance of this idea.

The famous Russian pedagogue AS Makarenko said, "A teacher must know how to organize, walk, joke, be cheerful, and be angry. He must behave in such a way that his every action educates." In the system of pedagogical skills, pedagogical tact (tact) is characterized as a measure, norm, and limit of a teacher's pedagogically purposeful, useful, and valuable actions.

Professional identification is the process by which a person perceives themselves as a person of a particular profession and feels part of a professional field. This process is influenced by the following factors:

- Personal motivation is a person's interest in and desire for a profession.
- Professional competencies - the formation of necessary knowledge and skills.
- Social environment – professional community, mentoring, and interaction process.
- Personal development and experience – activities aimed at improving professional skills.

Professional acme is one of the main factors that strengthens professional identity. A person who has reached their professional peak considers themselves to be professionally fully formed and is ready to share their knowledge with others.

The following factors play an important role in achieving professional maturity:

1. Constant learning and self-improvement. A specialist must constantly update his knowledge and skills. Mastering innovative technologies and best practices is an important condition for professional growth.
2. Increase motivation. Intrinsic motivation (interest in the profession, desire for self-development). Extrinsic motivation (financial incentives, social recognition).
3. Mentoring and experience sharing. Sharing knowledge and experience through a mentor-student system helps to achieve professional maturity faster.
4. Psychological stability and balance. A person may face many difficulties on the way to achieving professional acme. Stress tolerance and problem-solving skills are important in this process.

In sum, the literature underscores that professional identity is both constructed and aspirational. The pursuit of professional acme is an essential part of this identity journey, motivating individuals to continuously refine their expertise, align practice with values, and engage in lifelong learning.

Professional "acme" plays an important role in the development of professional identity. When a person reaches his professional peak, he considers himself professionally fully formed and has a place in society. This process should be supported by continuous learning, motivation, mentoring and psychological stability. Personal and professional maturity is the key to a person's success not only in work, but also in life in general.

The effectiveness of the education system directly depends on the professional skills and maturity of teachers. Today, innovative changes, technological developments, and modern pedagogical approaches are gaining importance in the field of education. For teachers, achieving professional "acme" is not only a matter of reaching the peak of professional skills, but also a process of constantly updating their knowledge and experience, ensuring personal and professional growth.

The following were identified as the main aspects of the manifestation of professional "acme" in teachers:

- high ability to influence students;
- use of modern teaching methods;
- psychological resilience and creative approach;
- stability and exchange of experience in pedagogical activities.

Teachers are not just educators, they are also leaders who guide students on their professional paths. Therefore, their professional development is of strategic importance to society.

A teacher who has not achieved professional maturity may have a low quality of education. This has a negative impact on the level of knowledge of students, the prestige of the educational institution, and the development of society as a whole.

The main need to develop professional "acme" is explained by the following factors:

1. Adaptation to modern educational requirements. The rapid development of educational technologies requires teachers to master new methods. The use of innovative teaching methods helps create a competitive educational environment.
2. Positively impacting student growth. When a teacher reaches professional acme, students' knowledge levels increase. Pedagogical maturity increases students' motivation and develops their creative thinking.
3. Increase the level of personal and professional satisfaction of the teacher. Professional success leads the teacher to enjoy his profession. Continuous growth has a positive effect on pedagogical activity and increases motivation.
4. The role of educators in the development of society. Teachers who have achieved professional maturity improve the quality of education. They play an important role in educating the future generation and contribute to the development of scientific achievements.

Result and Discussion

To achieve professional acme, teachers must constantly work on themselves. Below are effective ways to achieve professional maturity:

1. Continuing education and professional development. Teachers should learn new pedagogical methods and educational technologies. Participation in local and international seminars provides teachers with the opportunity to gain new knowledge and experience.
2. Use innovative pedagogical methods. It is necessary to implement innovative approaches such as interactive teaching methods, STEAM and CLIL. The use of digital technologies increases the efficiency of the educational process.
3. Develop scientific research activities. Teachers should write scientific articles, study pedagogical experiences, and develop their own methods. It is useful to participate in international and national conferences to exchange experience.

4. Increase motivation and ensure personal growth. It is recommended to attend various courses and trainings for self-improvement and psychological development. Maintaining a balance between personal life and professional activities will help you achieve professional "acme" faster.
5. Mentoring and sharing experiences. Mentoring and guiding young teachers increases the professional development of teachers. Participation in teamwork and the development of professional cooperation strengthen pedagogical skills.

The implications of professional acme for teacher education are significant and multifaceted. Teacher education programs must not only develop pedagogical competence but also foster a sense of professional purpose and identity in future educators. Institutions can support this by designing curricula that include reflective practice modules, mentorship opportunities, and professional learning communities. Encouraging pre-service teachers to articulate their professional values, engage with role models, and set long-term career aspirations can help cultivate a strong sense of identity aligned with the pursuit of excellence. Additionally, exposing teacher candidates to diverse educational contexts and interdisciplinary collaboration can help them envision a broader impact, reinforcing their motivation to achieve their professional acme. Sustainable teacher development should also prioritize emotional and ethical dimensions of teaching, acknowledging that reaching acme is not merely about technical skill, but also about personal growth, resilience, and societal contribution. By creating environments that value introspection, agency, and lifelong learning, teacher education can empower individuals to see their work as a meaningful vocation and strive toward their professional peak.

Conclusion

Professional acme represents an important but underexplored dimension in understanding professional identity. As educators and researchers seek to support meaningful career development, acknowledging and cultivating the aspiration for excellence can strengthen identity, resilience, and long-term professional fulfillment.

Therefore, the need to achieve professional "acme" is a continuous process for teachers, requiring constant growth and work on themselves. Teachers who have achieved personal and professional maturity help students become leaders who lead them to success in the future.

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