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## FORMATION OF THE PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE OF FUTURE FASHION INDUSTRY SPECIALISTS WITH EMPLOYERS' INVOLVEMENT IN THE EDUCATIONAL PROCESS

**Purpose.** *The modern labour market in the fashion industry requires specialists with creative thinking, strong communication skills, initiative, and with the ability for continuous self-education, and quick adaptation to the demands of modern production environments. These specialists must possess high professional competence and practical skills for working in the real production sector. To form such specialists, it is increasingly relevant to consider the issues regarding the interaction between higher professional education systems and potential employers, as well as the exploration of innovative forms of integration and mutual interest between universities and businesses. This research aims to explore methods of forming the professional competence of future fashion industry specialists, considering employers' experiences and their involvement in the educational process.*

**Methodology.** *To determine the impact of educational activities conducted in production environments on forming professional competence in future fashion industry specialists, principles of the systemic approach were used. Theoretical methods such as synthesis, analysis, and generalisation were employed, alongside empirical methods including observation, interviews, questionnaires, testing, and surveys.*

**Results.** *The research is devoted to solving the issues of forming professional competence in future specialists in the fashion industry and developing students' interest in the future profession by involving experienced industry specialists in the educational process and using the technical base of enterprises.*

**Scientific novelty.** *The authors proposed innovative models for forming professional competencies in higher education students studying Speciality 182: Light Industry Technologies by conducting various educational events in the industrial environment.*

**Practical value.** *The authors share their practical experience in conducting educational activities for students of Speciality 182: Light Industry Technologies at fashion industry enterprises and the methods of organising classes in the production environment of factories. They offer the following recommendations: each educational component's curriculum should establish a mandatory list of activities involving employers and specify the content of the classes. It is advisable to carry out classes at fashion industry enterprises, as a form of educational activity, purposefully and systematically. These activities should be at least 10-15% of the total study time, provided that partners characterising production processes will emphasise the professional growth prospects, and the profession's importance, additionally increasing students' motivation. The use of active teaching methods in the educational process contributes to the formation and development of future fashion industry specialists' general and professional competencies and the development of independent thinking, creative activity, readiness for continuous education and self-education.*

**Keywords:** *professional competence, educational activities with the involvement of enterprises, professional mobility, enterprises of the fashion industry.*

## ФОРМУВАННЯ ПРОФЕСІЙНОЇ КОМПЕТЕНТНОСТІ МАЙБУТНІХ ФАХІВЦІВ ІНДУСТРІЇ МОДИ ІЗ ЗАЛУЧЕННЯМ РОБОТОДАВЦІВ ДО ОСВІТНЬОГО ПРОЦЕСУ

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**Мета.** Сучасний ринок праці індустрії моди потребує фахівців з креативним мисленням, комунікативних, ініціативних, здатних до постійної самоосвіти та швидкої адаптації до вимог сучасного виробничого середовища, які мають високий рівень професійної компетентності, володіють практичними навичками роботи у реальному секторі виробництва. Для формування такого спеціаліста все більш актуальним стають питання взаємодії системи вищої професійної освіти та потенційних роботодавців, пошуку нових форм інтеграції та взаємної зацікавленості між університетами та бізнесом. Метою роботи є дослідження шляхів формування професійної компетентності майбутнього фахівця індустрії моди із врахуванням досвіду роботодавців та залученням їх до освітнього процесу.

**Методи.** Для визначення впливу освітніх заходів, що проводяться у виробничих умовах, на формування професійної компетентності майбутнього фахівця індустрії моди використовувались принципи системного підходу, теоретичні методи – синтез, аналіз, узагальнення; та емпіричні – спостереження, бесіди, анкетування, тестування, інтерв'ювання, опитування.

**Результати.** Статтю присвячено вирішенню питань формування професійної компетентності майбутніх фахівців індустрії моди та розвитку інтересу студентів до майбутньої професії шляхом залучення до освітнього процесу досвідчених спеціалістів галузі та використання технічної бази підприємств.

**Наукова новизна.** Авторами запропоновано інноваційні моделі формування професійних компетентностей здобувачів вищої освіти, які навчаються за спеціальністю 182 Технології легкої промисловості, шляхом проведення ряду різноманітних освітніх заходів у виробничих умовах.

**Практична значимість.** Автори діляться практичним досвідом проведення навчальних заходів для здобувачів освіти за спеціальністю 182 Технології легкої промисловості на підприємствах індустрії моди та методами організації занять у виробничих умовах фабрик. Запропоновано наступні рекомендації: у робочих програмах кожного освітнього компонента встановлювати обов'язковий перелік заходів для проведення із залученням роботодавців та конкретизувати зміст занять. Доцільно, щоб заняття на підприємствах індустрії моди, як вид освітньої діяльності, здійснювалися цілеспрямовано та систематично, і становили не менше 10 – 15 % від загального обсягу навчального часу, за умови, що партнери, характеризуючи виробничі процеси, акцентуватимуть на перспективах професійного зростання, значущості професії, додатково забезпечуючи підвищення мотивації студентів. Використання в освітньому процесі активних форм проведення занять сприяє формуванню та розвитку загальних та професійних компетенцій майбутніх фахівців індустрії моди, сприяє розвитку самостійності мислення, творчої активності, готовності до безперервної освіти та самоосвіти.

**Ключові слова:** професійна компетентність, формування компетентностей, освітні заходи із залученням представників підприємств, підприємства індустрії моди.

Statement of the problem and its connection with important scientific and practical tasks. Highly innovative dynamics characterise the modern labour market, and, correspondingly, make higher demands on graduates of higher education institutions, needs specialists with creative thinking, communicative, proactive, capable of constant

self-education and quick adaptation to the modern industrial environment requirements, who have a high level of professional competence, have practical skills of working in the real sector of production, know how to work in a team, are ready to make reasonable production and management decisions.

The main goal of the educational activities of the Kyiv National University of Technology and Design (KNUTD) is the training of highly qualified and competitive specialists on the national and international labour markets, the establishment of national, cultural and universal values, the formation of moral principles and norms of personal behaviour [1]. The priority task of the university is to guide the student, help him adapt to an adult and independent life, prepare him to make independent decisions, teach him to show creative initiative and stimulate the desire for constant self-development and self-improvement.

Successful professional development is possible only on the conscious choice basis of a professional path. However, today university students mostly do not have a clear comprehension of their future speciality, do not understand the full range of opportunities that open up after mastering professional skills, and do not see ways of further professional development. This raises problems during the employment of a young specialist who has just graduated from an educational institution and does not have sufficient work experience. The vast majority of graduates are not aware of the challenges of competition in the labour market.

Problem solutions require departments and faculties to conduct events with students, which will be aimed at introducing them to the features and conditions of future professional activity, which will form in them a creative approach to further activities, orientate them to social and professional mobility, to the ability to apply competences gained during training, theoretical knowledge and practical skills in various areas of professional activity. To solve the above tasks, the issues of finding new forms of mutual interest, interaction, and integration of institutions of higher professional education and potential employers are becoming more and more relevant.

**Analysis of the latest research.** In works [2–7] the authors consider various aspects of the professional competence formation of future specialists in the economic and financial profile. The publication [8] is devoted to the formation of the professional competence of future engineering professionals. Posts [9, 10] are devoted to the formation of professional competence of future tourism specialists. The authors of article [11] study the formation of professional competencies of vocational

education students. Formation features of professional competence in technology and design through CAD JULIVI are considered at work [12]. In the article [13], a model of formation of professional competence oriented towards sustainable development in future specialists is proposed. The work [14] analyses the development of dual education as one of the conditions for the formation of professional competence of road transport technicians.

Therefore, existing experience in developing of scientific and pedagogical thought testifies to the urgency of issues to develop theoretical foundations and practical ways of forming the professional competence of the future specialist. However, there are still many unexplored aspects of this issue regarding the academic training of bachelors in light industry technologies. The analysis of works [2–14] showed the importance of combining the theoretical training of young people in the university with the development of experience at workplaces at enterprises of the industry. This symbiosis allows doing more advanced professional training.

**The purpose of the article** is to research ways of forming the professional competence of a future specialist in the fashion industry, taking into account the experience of employers and involving them in the educational process.

**Research methods.** To determine the influence of educational activities take place in the production environment on the formation of professional competence of future fashion industry specialists, we used the principles of the system approach, theoretical methods — synthesis, analysis, generalisation; and empirical — observations, conversations, questionnaires, testing, interviews, surveys.

**Presentation of the main results and their justification.** For many years, scientific and pedagogical staff of the Faculty of Arts and Fashion of the Kyiv National University of Technology and Design (KNUTD) have been conducting productive cooperation with partner enterprises in such areas as:

1. Undertaking industrial practice by undergraduate students, the purpose of which is deepening theoretical knowledge and consolidating practical abilities in project design, research and administrative work acquired at the university by studying production environment, using acquired

knowledge to solve technical and managerial problems, as well as the collection of factual information for the implementation of course projects (works).

2. The completion of pre-diploma practice by students studying at the master's level, the purpose of which is to deepen and consolidate theoretical knowledge from all educational courses of the educational program, to master advanced forms and methods of work organization and management, to get acquainted with calculation and analytical operations, technical means of performing work in the field of the future profession. During practice completion, professional skills and abilities are formed for preparing and making independently substantiated organizational and economic decisions in the real business environment. Practice stimulates the need for constant improvement of intellectual potential and develops creative abilities [15].

3. Conducting an industry vacancies fair and career days [16, 17] to ensure direct interaction between employers and students, to activate young people to acquire professional skills that are in demand in the labour market, and to provide comprehensive information about fashion industry enterprises.

4. Involvement of business representatives to participate in scientific and practical conferences and exhibitions of various levels to discuss the urgent needs of the fashion industry labour market and issues of quality specialists training in this field.

5. Conducting round tables with stakeholders, at which prospects for the development of educational programs for training bachelors, masters, and PhDs in Speciality 182: Light Industry Technologies are discussed.

6. Participation of stakeholders in surveys to assess the quality of training of specialists and take into account the employers' wishes.

It should be noted that the Faculty of Arts and Fashion is constantly searching for new forms of integration of education and business. In the 2023/2024 academic year, various innovative models of the educational process organization were launched and successfully tested by the faculty as a supplement to the traditional forms of educational program assimilation. The main target of such innovations is

improving the quality of higher professional education through strengthening practical training. This is ensured, in particular, by involving fashion industry representatives for active participation in the educational process by conducting classes in various disciplines by leading enterprises specialists in forms of introducing tours to study the structure and features of technological production processes; lectures on various themes, practical classes, masterclasses; conducting laboratory classes by scientific and pedagogical workers of the faculty's departments at production facilities, using innovative equipment and the technological base of enterprises.

The aims of such events are: development of interest in one's future profession; formation of professional and personal qualities, positive motives for self-realization and self-improvement in future professional activities; and obtaining additional knowledge in the field of development of light industry technological processes.

To generate interest in the chosen profession, and get acquainted with the technological processes and equipment used at the industry enterprises, the scientific and pedagogical staff of the faculty started regularly conducting various events in an industrial environment (excursions, practical classes, lectures, master classes) for students who are studying for Speciality 182: Light Industry Technologies.

The goals of events organized at production facilities are multifaceted. These include introducing students to the structure of enterprises, the specifics of manufacturing light industry products of various assortments and purposes, modern equipment and technologies used in the industry, studying advanced labour organization practices at enterprises of different capacities, and more. However, the career orientation role of such events is the main one – introducing students to the work content of the company's employees and their future specialities.

The events are conducted to help students develop professional competencies, and key abilities, needed in any activity field, such as:

- cognitive ability is the capacity to independently acquire and learn modern knowledge, the desire to find information for educational purposes;
- functional – understanding of future

professional activities, the ability to apply theoretical knowledge in practical activities, the ability to formulate goals and tasks in the implementation of professional activities; knowledge of the basics of enterprise organization and management;

- social and psychological – establishing good relationships with people, ability to work in a team; capacity for criticism and self-criticism, tolerance;
- information – the ability to receive, systematize, analyse and transmit information;
- creative – the ability to create, the ability to set and solve non-standard tasks;
- communicative – the ability to adequately perceive oral speech, the ability to argue and defend one's opinion, the ability to professionally use special terminology for the design and manufacture of products and technologies of light industry, the ability to communicate with representatives of different professional groups of various levels, to conduct discussions.

In addition, visual perception of technology processes forms students' analytical thinking and enhances interest in learning the material. Based on what they observe, students can envision themselves in the production setting. It inspires them to engage more deeply with the subjects related to their chosen profession.

From our perspective, the work program of each educational component should contain a mandatory list of activities to be carried out in enterprises and specify class content. It is advisable that classes at industry enterprises, as a form of educational activity, are carried out purposefully and systematically, occupying at least 10 – 15 % of the total educational time. This should be ensured on the condition that industry partners, while characterizing production processes, focus on professional growth prospects, and the significance of the profession, and additionally enhance student motivation.

Significant assistance in organizing excursions to operational production enterprises in the industry is provided by the leadership of Kyiv National University of Technologies and Design, the Dean of the

Faculty of Arts and Fashion, the Ukrainian Association of Light Industry Enterprises and members of the Ukrainian Light Industry Cluster.

It is noteworthy that the work of the industry enterprises and institutions aimed at direct contact and collaboration with universities to attract young specialists to their activities has recently become significantly more active. Thus, enterprise leaders are always eager to host students at their production facilities for excursions, practical lessons, or industrial practice. They are happy to visit our university as part of a round table, a practical masterclass or an open lecture. Employers are eager to collaborate to bolster the professional competence of students.

Let's share our experiences in organizing and conducting educational events for students majoring in Speciality 182: Light Industry Technologies, in collaboration with leading enterprises in the light industry.

Students have the opportunity to master sections of the disciplines 'Garment Manufacturing Technologies' and 'Fundamentals of Designing Technological Processes for Mass Clothing Production' at the facilities of 'Dana-Moda' LLC, a sewing enterprise with a long and illustrious history, established in 1978. Currently, 'Dana-Moda' LLC is a comprehensive, mechanized enterprise that employs the latest garment production technology. The factory is equipped with modern technological equipment from renowned companies such as Juki, Veit, Pfaff, Durkopp, Meyer, Bulmer, and others. 'Dana-Moda' specialises in the production of women's and men's outerwear, including coats, semi-coats, women's jackets, men's jackets, raincoats, women's skirts, and trousers made from various types of modern fabrics. At present, the factory is also engaged in the production of currently relevant products – elements of military equipment.

The specifics of the events which took place at 'Dana-Moda' LLC during the 2023/2024 academic year are detailed in [18-19]. We will focus on the key aspects. Figure 1 presents key moments of the educational event conducted for students by the director of 'Dana-Moda' LLC, Lyudmila Ivanova, a graduate of our university and a stakeholder in the educational programs of Speciality 182: Light Industry Technologies.

Lyudmila Ivanova acquainted the students with the main factory's workshops, tasks, and interconnections of workshops, thoroughly explaining the enterprise's technological processes of producing garments of various types and purposes.

has become a production leader of finished textile products in Ukraine. The main production facilities are located in Kyiv, Odesa, and Chernihiv. Company managers equip the sewing sections with modern industrial equipment from Juki and Brother,



Fig. 1. **Training events for students in the production setting of the "Dana-Moda" enterprise**

Lyudmila Ivanova delivered a lecture to the students as part of teaching the discipline of Garment Manufacturing Technologies on the topic: "Peculiarities of manufacturing technology of sewing products with high quality", using real elements of the technological process and finished products as demonstration material in the preparatory and sewing workshops.

Leading specialists of the factory took part in the tour. Ihor Ivanov, the technologist of the enterprise and a worthy successor of a fashion industry dynasty, shared his experience and insights into the features of manufacturing special-purpose sewing products (such as parachutes, aerostats, etc.). Students had the opportunity to consolidate their knowledge of garment manufacturing technologies for various purposes by visiting the "TK-Domashniy Tekstyl" sewing enterprise. Figure 2 shows fragments of the conducted session [20], which took place with the support of the head of the human resources department, Nataliya Aminova.

"TK-Domashniy Tekstyl" LLC is part of the 'Textile-Contact' group of companies and, with over 25 years of successful operation,

assuring the highest production quality. All manufacturing is certified under the ISO 9001 quality management system and the ISO 14001 environmental management system. The product range includes sets of bed linen made from their natural fabrics, knitted sheets and pillowcases, mattress covers, terry bathrobes and towels, pillows and blankets, quilted bedspreads, kitchen textiles, SPA accessories, and much more. Manufacturers give special attention to the production of textiles for newborns. 'TK-Domashniy Tekstyl' manufactures knitted and textile products for the state financial aid program 'Baby Box' [21].

During the tour, Nataliya Aminova showed the students the spacious working premises of the enterprise and introduced them to the technological processes of product manufacturing.

During the visit to the experimental department, Pavlyna Piddubna, a technical designer at the enterprise who graduated from KNUTD in 2020 with a degree in Design and Technology of Sewing Products, shared her work experience with the students.



Fig. 2. **Training events for students in the environment of the production enterprise TK-Domashniy Tekstyl**

In the conditions of the "Ariamo Fashion Group" sewing enterprise, students have the opportunity to master the specifics of designing and manufacturing sewing items for festive purposes (Fig. 3).

"Ariamo Fashion Group" LLC, founded in 2015, is currently a leading manufacturer of wedding dresses with 480 stores in 50 countries worldwide. The main enterprise goal is to create the perfect wedding look for every bride. Therefore, the dress designs are developed in four distinct and multifaceted designer lines: Ariamo Light, Ariamo Boho, Madioni, and Carfelli. Each dress is crafted in Ukraine with love. Wedding and evening wear of "Ariamo Fashion Group" is appreciated by numerous brides worldwide. Beautiful and famous girls choose the company's dresses for various contests, fashion shows, and red carpets [22].

This year, a series of educational events were held at this enterprise (Figure 3).

The career orientation tour was conducted by the founders of "Ariamo Fashion Group" LLC Anna and Vitaly Grydasovy, and the production manager Valery Khomenko [23, 24]. They acquaint visitors with the range of bridal attire produced by the enterprise and the technological processes involved in its manufacturing, focusing in detail on the specifics of experimental production. Students had the opportunity to review the project documentation that accompanies model production, as well as the peculiarities of cutting, sewing, and embellishing bridal gowns.

The study of the production processes stimulated a discussion about the competencies acquired by students during their studies at KNUTD. It also discussed the labour market needs of the industry and the employment prospects for graduates with bachelor's and master's degrees in Speciality 182: Light Industry Technologies. The enterprise leaders emphasised the



Fig. 3. **Training activities for students in the production environment of the enterprise "Ariamo Fashion Group"**

relevance and extraordinary demand for specialists such as technologists and designers of sewing garments. The sides of the discussion paid particular attention to the problems of identifying individual students' characteristics, interests, and abilities to ensure their choosing the best profession corresponding to the acquired competencies.

To reinforce theoretical knowledge in the discipline "Creative Technologies in the Sewing Industry" and practically provide

insights into the use of creative technologies in decorating wedding dresses, the lecturers of the Fashion and Style Department – Larisa Bilotska (Ph.D., Associate Professor) and Svitlana Lozovenko (Assistant) have conducted field laboratory sessions at the production environment of "Ariamo Fashion Group" with the support of the company's designers Natalia Makatera, Alexandra Denysova, and other staff [23]. Students had the opportunity to introduce themselves with methods for designing garment draped, folds

and puffs, techniques for creating artificial flowers, methods for perforating goods, and more. To study creative technologies, the equipment of the enterprise was used. The students derived particular satisfaction from having the chance to personally attempt to replicate various clothing decoration techniques within the enterprise's production facilities.

The lead designer of the enterprise, Hanna Oliynyk, shared with the students the specifics of working with the Julivi CAD system within the course "Computer Technologies in the Garment Industry." They discussed the capabilities and prospects of using the Clo3d program in the process of garment modelling and design.

As part of the course "Materials Science", representatives from "Ariamo Fashion Group" delivered a lecture to higher education students on the topic "Production, Structure, and Creative Finishing of Textile Fabrics" [23]. They explored the range of materials used

in wedding attire production, with attention given to fabric weaves and lace-making methods. Students had the opportunity to gain knowledge about the specifics of selecting a set of materials for wedding garments depending on the style, silhouette, and design of the item.

Students had an opportunity to study the manufacturing technologies of light industry products during a tour of the "SURIKAT" enterprise ("Surikat UA" LLC). "SURIKAT" operating in the Ukrainian market since 2012. Today the company specialises in the production of a wide range of products: backpacks, including children's backpacks, bags, covers, tactical gear for military personnel, special-purpose items made to order, and promotional corporate products from synthetic and natural materials (Oxford, Cordura), among others. The production facility is equipped with advanced technological equipment, including machines for medium and heavy materials from Juki, Siruba, and Typical [25].



Fig. 4. **Educational events for students in the production environment of the "SURIKAT" enterprise**

Figure 4 illustrates an educational event conducted in the 2023/2024 academic year by the director of the enterprise, Mykhailo Kucherenko, and marketing specialist Alina Huz for students. The industrial experts provided students with a detailed overview of the technological process for manufacturing backpacks and bag products and the equipment of the main production workshops. They demonstrated the operation of modern automatic machines, cutting machines, and automated tape-cutting installations [26].

Thus, the formation of professional competencies through the application of various teaching methods, including educational events at leading industry enterprises, fosters independent thinking, creative activity, and readiness for continuous learning and self-education. It is noteworthy that this form of interaction receives positive feedback from both employers and students.

After such educational events, the acquisition of theoretical material from professional disciplines becomes more productive. More importantly, students gain an understanding that enterprises require qualified specialists who can not only perform assigned tasks but also plan and organize the work of a structural unit. Students become more interested in their future profession, understand the importance of adapting to the frequently changing technologies, and realise the necessity of independently setting tasks for professional and personal development.

Subsequently, students who show the biggest interest in the activities of a particular enterprise have the opportunity to undergo practical training there. Employers, in turn, by organizing such educational events, have the chance to select future employees and attract young talent to work at the enterprise.

The result of training students within the framework of the innovative system of interaction with industry enterprises is a high level of practice-oriented professional competencies among future specialists in the fashion industry. A significant increase in the overall quality indicators of student training compared to previous periods evidences this. Graduates of educational programs in Speciality 182: Light Industry Technologies not only possess a comprehensive understanding of their chosen field but also acquire the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary for rapid adaptation to the production environment.

Of course, the successful implementation of such an integrated education system requires the willingness of manufacturers to invest in the training of their future specialists. However, the experience of holding educational events at enterprises, round tables, and conferences within the university shows a growing interest among entrepreneurs in participating in the educational process.

**Conclusions.** At the Arts and Fashion Faculty of KNUTD, various innovative models of conducting classes for higher education students specializing in light industry technologies have been initiated and successfully tested. Experienced specialists from the fashion industry are involved in the educational process. The system of educational events in the production environment of industry enterprises is implemented.

The active forms application of conducting classes (such as excursions and open lectures) in the educational process provides an opportunity to form and develop the general and professional competencies of future fashion industry specialists. It promotes the development of independent thinking, creative activity, readiness for continuous learning, and self-education.

The major advantages of cooperation with employers by involving them in educational events include the ability to prepare specialists for the actual needs of enterprises and the possibility of personnel, and material support for the educational process by enterprises. These advantages also include the possibility of targeted employment of graduates and their quick adaptation to production.

We consider it necessary to implement a system of educational events for students at industry enterprises. We think it is expedient to carry out such measures purposefully and systematically, to allocate at least 10-15% of the total educational time. But manufacturers representing the production processes must emphasise the professional growth prospects, and the importance of the speciality, additionally ensuring an increase in students' motivation. As a result, the level of professional competence of graduates will successfully grow.

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for the engaging educational activities, excursions, meaningful classes, knowledge and experience, which are essential for developing the professional competencies of future specialists in the fashion industry.

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