



ТЕОРІЯ І МЕТОДИКА ПРОФЕСІЙНОЇ ОСВІТИ

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**Value-Based Attitude toward Older Generation in the Future Social Workers'
Professional Readiness Structure**

Nina Tverezovska,

Doctor of Pedagogical Sciences, Professor, Professor of the Department of Social Work and Rehabilitation, National University of Life and Environmental Sciences of Ukraine, Kyiv, Ukraine, <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-0672-9308>

Tetiana Hryhorenko,

Doctor of Pedagogical Sciences, Professor, Professor of the Department of Social Work and Rehabilitation, National University of Life and Environmental Sciences of Ukraine, Kyiv, Ukraine, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4616-6853>

Daria Suprun,

Doctor of Pedagogical Sciences, Professor, Professor of the Department of Social Work and Rehabilitation, National University of Life and Environmental Sciences of Ukraine, Kyiv, Ukraine, <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4725-094X>

Iryna Demchenko,

Doctor of Pedagogical Sciences, Professor, Professor of the Department of Social Work and Rehabilitation, National University of Life and Environmental Sciences of Ukraine, Kyiv, Ukraine, <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4302-7564>



Inna Osadchenko

Doctor of Pedagogical Sciences, Professor, Professor of the Department of Social Work and Rehabilitation, National University of Life and Environmental Sciences of Ukraine, Kyiv, Ukraine, <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0682-5145>

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***Abstract.** The relevance of the study is determined by demographic population ageing, the growing need for high-quality social services for older generation, the necessity of overcoming ageist and paternalistic attitudes in social work, and the increasing importance of the ethical component in the professional education of future specialists. The aim of the research is to theoretically clarify the essence of a value-based attitude toward older generation, substantiate its place in the structure of future social workers' professional readiness, and identify the substantive characteristics of this phenomenon in the context of contemporary professional training. The research methods included theoretical analysis, generalisation, systematisation, and comparison of scholarly approaches to the professional readiness of future social workers, gerontological training, students' attitudes toward older generation, empathy, intergenerational interaction, and non-discriminatory practice. Structural and logical analysis was used to determine the place of a value-based attitude within the system of professional readiness, while analytical modelling was applied to distinguish its substantive characteristics, criteria, indicators, and pedagogical conditions for its formation. The results of the study made it possible to substantiate a value-based attitude toward older generation as an integral personal and professional characteristic of a future social worker. Its manifestations were identified in respect for the dignity of an older person, recognition of their autonomy, life experience, social agency, right to choice, participation in community life, and partnership-based interaction in the process of social support. It has been demonstrated that a value-*



based attitude performs integrative and meaning-making functions, as it connects the motivational-value, cognitive, emotional-empathic, communicative-activity, and reflective components of professional readiness. The criteria for the formation of this phenomenon have been defined as motivational-value, cognitive, emotional-empathic, behavioural-activity, and reflective. It is concluded that a value-based attitude toward older generation should be regarded not as a secondary manifestation of a general humanistic orientation, but as an important component of future social workers' professional readiness. Its purposeful formation contributes to improving the quality of professional training, developing ethical sensitivity, overcoming ageism, and promoting partnership-based, non-discriminatory interaction with older generation .

Keywords: *professional training, gerontological competence, social work, ageism, empathy, intergenerational interaction, professional ethics, non-discriminatory practice.*

Ціннісне ставлення до людей старшого покоління у структурі професійної готовності майбутніх соціальних працівників

Тверезовська Ніна Трохимівна,

доктор педагогічних наук, професор, професор кафедри соціальної роботи та реабілітації, Національний університет біоресурсів і природокористування України, вул. Героїв Оборони, 15, м. Київ, 03041, Україна, <https://orcid.org/0000-0000-0000-0000>

Григоренко Тетяна Володимирівна

доктор педагогічних наук, професор, професор кафедри соціальної роботи та реабілітації, Національний університет біоресурсів і природокористування України, вул. Героїв Оборони, 15, м. Київ, 03041, Україна, <https://orcid.org/0000-0000-0000-0000>



Супрун Дар'я Миколаївна,

доктор педагогічних наук, професор, професор кафедри соціальної роботи та реабілітації, Національний університет біоресурсів і природокористування України, вул. Героїв Оборони, 15, м. Київ, 03041, Україна, <https://orcid.org/0000-0000-0000-0000>

Демченко Ірина Іванівна,

доктор педагогічних наук, професор, професор кафедри соціальної роботи та реабілітації, Національний університет біоресурсів і природокористування України, вул. Героїв Оборони, 15, м. Київ, 03041, Україна, <https://orcid.org/0000-0000-0000-0000>

Осадченко Інна Іванівна,

доктор педагогічних наук, професор, професор кафедри соціальної роботи та реабілітації, Національний університет біоресурсів і природокористування України, вул. Героїв Оборони, 15, м. Київ, 03041, Україна, <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0682-5145>

***Анотація.** Актуальність дослідження зумовлена демографічним старінням населення, зростанням потреби в якісних соціальних послугах для старших людей, необхідністю подолання ейджистських і патерналістських установок у соціальній роботі та посиленням етичної складової професійної освіти майбутніх фахівців. Мета полягала в теоретичному уточненні сутності ціннісного ставлення до людей старшого покоління, обґрунтуванні його місця у структурі професійної готовності майбутніх соціальних працівників та визначенні змістових характеристик цього феномену в контексті сучасної фахової підготовки. Методи дослідження охоплювали теоретичний аналіз,*



узагальнення, систематизацію та порівняння наукових підходів до професійної готовності майбутніх соціальних працівників, геронтологічної підготовки, ставлення студентів до старших людей, емпатії, міжпоколінної взаємодії та недискримінаційної практики. Використано структурно-логічний аналіз для визначення місця ціннісного ставлення у системі професійної готовності, а також аналітичне моделювання для виокремлення його змістових характеристик, критеріїв, показників і педагогічних умов формування. Результати дослідження дали змогу обґрунтувати ціннісне ставлення до людей старшого покоління як інтегральну особистісно-професійну характеристику майбутнього соціального працівника. Встановлено його вияв у повазі до гідності старшої людини, визнанні її автономії, життєвого досвіду, соціальної суб'єктності, права на вибір, участь у житті громади та партнерську взаємодію у процесі соціальної підтримки. Доведено, що ціннісне ставлення виконує інтегрувальну й смислотворчу функції, оскільки пов'язує мотиваційно-ціннісний, когнітивний, емоційно-емпатійний, комунікативно-діяльнісний і рефлексивний компоненти професійної готовності. Визначено критерії сформованості цього феномену: мотиваційно-ціннісний, когнітивний, емоційно-емпатійний, поведінково-діяльнісний і рефлексивний. Зроблено висновок щодо розгляду ціннісного ставлення до людей старшого покоління не як другорядного прояву загальної гуманістичної спрямованості, а як важливої складової професійної готовності майбутніх соціальних працівників, цілеспрямоване формування якогосприяє підвищенню якості фахової підготовки, розвитку етичної чутливості, подоланню ейджизму та утвердженню партнерської, недискримінаційної взаємодії зі старшими людьми.

Ключові слова: професійна підготовка, геронтологічна компетентність, соціальна робота, ейджизм, емпатія, міжпоколінна взаємодія, професійна етика, недискримінаційна практика.



Statement of the Problem. Contemporary demographic, social, and humanitarian challenges have brought to the fore the issue of professional training of future social workers for interaction with older generation. The growing proportion of older adults, the increasing complexity of their social, psychological, and medico-social needs, as well as the consequences of war, economic instability, and migration processes, create an urgent need for specialists capable of providing assistance based on the principles of respect, dignity, empathy, tolerance, and non-discrimination.

Of particular importance is the formation of a value-based attitude towards older generation as an essential component of future social workers' professional readiness. Such attitude determines the nature of interaction with the client and involves perceiving an older person not merely as a recipient of social services, but as an individual with unique life experience, needs, resources, rights, and the capacity for active social participation.

The relevance of the problem is intensified by the persistence of age-related stereotypes, ageism, and a formalistic approach in social work, in which the needs of older generation are often reduced to material or medical assistance, while their needs for communication, self-realization, and participation in community life remain insufficiently addressed. Therefore, professional training should ensure not only the acquisition of legal and regulatory knowledge and social work technologies, but also the development of empathy, critical reflection, and the ability to overcome stereotypes about ageing.

Thus, there is a contradiction between society's growing need for specialists capable of ethically and humanistically oriented interaction with older generation and the insufficient development of theoretical and methodological foundations for forming such a value-based attitude in future social workers. This necessitates a scholarly substantiation of its essence and its place within the educational process of higher education institutions.



Analysis of Recent Research and Publications. The professional training of future social workers for practice with older generation is regarded as multidimensional issue that includes demographic changes, development of social services, formation of gerontological competence, and ethical foundations of professional activity. Researchers emphasize not only cognitive and operational aspects, but also the value-motivational component, which shapes a humanistic attitude toward older generation .

Ukrainian scholarship such as V. Polishchuk [13], N. Pavlyshyna [10], T. Holubenko [6], O. Kuznetsova [9], M. Zhytinska [17], I. Romanova [15], and O. Piontkivska [12] examine the content and structure of professional readiness, gerontological training, patronage, and socio-psychological support. They stress on the need to update educational programmes in response to modern challenges. However, the value-based attitude toward older generation is mostly treated as part of general professional culture and is rarely given a clear structural definition. Issues of older generation's agency, social potential, and active participation remain insufficiently explored.

International studies by D. Wang and J. Chonody [16], S. Baik and J. Davitt [2], P. Pentaris [11], D. Apgar and D. Hynes [1], and others focus on students' attitudes toward ageing and the factors that shape them. These studies show that positive attitudes are developed through education, practical experience, empathy, and intergenerational interaction, while negative stereotypes and ageism reduce motivation to work in gerontology. Particular attention is paid to reinterpreting old age as a period of dignity, activity, and social participation.

Several authors, including D. Branson [3] and S. Rathnayake *et al.* [14], confirm the effectiveness of interactive educational technologies and interprofessional training in overcoming ageism and enhancing readiness to work with older generation .

Identification of previously unresolved aspects of the general problem. Despite the considerable number of scholarly works devoted to the professional training of future social workers for working with older generation, the issue of a value-



based attitude toward older generation within the structure of professional readiness remains insufficiently specified. Most studies focus on the formation of gerontological knowledge, practical skills, communicative competence, empathy, and socio-psychological support skills, whereas a value-based attitude is considered mainly indirectly, as a component of professional ethics, humanistic orientation, or motivation for gerontological practice.

The content of a value-based attitude toward older generation in the context of future social workers' professional readiness, as well as its structural place within this system, remains insufficiently defined. In scholarly approaches, readiness is usually described through motivational, cognitive, activity-based, communicative, and personal components. However, the relationship between a value-based attitude and these components, as well as its role, whether auxiliary or system-forming, is not always clearly outlined.

Special attention should be paid to the problem of overcoming ageism, paternalistic attitudes, and deficit-based perceptions of ageing in the process of professional training. In educational practice, older generation are often viewed primarily through the lens of loss and dependency, while their life experience, autonomy, and social activity receive insufficient emphasis. This creates the need for the training of future social workers that develops not only knowledge about ageing, but also a value-based perception of older generation as equal subjects of social interaction.

Statement of the Research. Aim and Objectives. The purpose of this article is to refine the theoretically essence of the value attitude towards older generation, to justify its position within the structure of professional readiness of future social workers, and to identify the substantive characteristics of this phenomenon in the context of modern professional education.

To achieve this goal, the research aims: (1) to analyze existing scientific approaches to the professional preparation of future social workers for practice with



older adults; (2) to clarify the content of the concept “value attitude towards older generation”; (3) to establish its interconnections with the motivational-value, cognitive, emotional-empathic, activity, and reflexive components of professional readiness; and (4) to substantiate the significance of this attitude for developing ethical, partnership-oriented, and non-discriminatory interactions between future social workers and older adults.

Presentation of the Main Research Material. Professional readiness of future social workers for practice with older generation in contemporary scientific discourse is regarded as a complex integral formation that integrates motivational, cognitive, activity-based, communicative, emotional-empathic, reflexive, and value-based components. This approach moves away from a narrow interpretation of training as merely the acquisition of knowledge about ageing or individual social assistance technologies. Instead, the emphasis is placed on the formation of a professional and value position that shapes the attitude towards older generation as subjects of their own lives, bearers of experience, rights, and social potential [6; 9; 10; 12; 13; 16; 17].

In this research, the value-based attitude towards older generation is understood as an integral personal and professional characteristic manifested in the recognition of their dignity, autonomy, life experience, and right to active participation in social life, as well as in the readiness for partnership-based, empathic, and non-discriminatory interaction. It is grounded in the principles of gerontological education, empathy, practice-oriented learning, intergenerational interaction, and the overcoming of ageism in social work training [1; 2; 4; 5; 7–11; 14].

It is important to note that a value-based attitude cannot be reduced to mere benevolence or compassion. In a professional context, it represents the recognition of an older person as an equal participant in the interaction, rather than merely a recipient of assistance. The key characteristics include respect for dignity, recognition of autonomy, acceptance of life experience, empathy, non-discrimination, partnership, and acknowledgement of the social agency of older generation (Table 1).



Table 1

Substantive Characteristics of the Value-Based Attitude towards Older Generation

Characteristic	Content of the Characteristic	Manifestation in Professional Training
Respect for dignity	Recognition of a person's value regardless of age, health, or status	Ethical language; avoidance of devaluation; attention to client needs
Recognition of autonomy	Respect for the right to choice and independence	Negotiation of assistance; involvement in care planning
Acceptance of life experience	Understanding the uniqueness of one's life path and experience	Use of interviews, biographical method, intergenerational dialogue
Empathic understanding	Awareness of the person's experiences, needs, and resources	Case analysis, role-playing exercises, reflective discussions
Non-discrimination	Overcoming ageism and age-related stereotypes	Analysis of discrimination in practices, language, and media
Partnership interaction	Perception of the person as an active participant in the interaction	Joint identification of needs, goals, and outcomes of assistance
Social agency	Recognition of their role and potential in community life	Development of active ageing initiatives and volunteering

Source: authors' own elaboration

The characteristics presented in Table 1 clarify the content of the value-based attitude and distinguish it from paternalistic or patronizing approaches to older generation. What is professionally significant is not a condescending attitude towards old age, but respect for human rights, recognition of autonomy, life experience, and the capacity to influence one's own life. This approach is crucial for overcoming ageism, as it counters stereotypes of passivity and social inactivity among older adults. Instead, value-oriented training develops the ability to perceive an older person holistically – taking into account their resources, experience, and right to participate in community life [1; 2; 4; 7; 8; 11; 14].

Within the structure of a social worker's professional readiness, the value-based attitude performs integrative and meaning-making functions, connecting all its components. In the motivational-value component, it manifests as interest in working with older generations and acceptance of humanistic principles; in the cognitive component, it gives ethical meaning to knowledge; in the emotional-empathic component, it ensures acceptance and co-experience; in the communicative-activity

component, it determines the nature of interaction; and in the reflexive component, it promotes awareness of one's own attitudes and possible manifestations of age-related biases (Table 2).

Table 2

Place of the Value-Based Attitude towards Older generation in the Structure of Professional Readiness of Future Social Workers

Component of Professional Readiness	Content of the Component	Role of the Value-Based Attitude
Motivational-value	Professional motives, interest in working with older generation , humanistic orientation	Ensures internal readiness for responsible, respectful, and informal interaction
Cognitive	Knowledge of ageing, needs, legal and ethical foundations of social support	Provides humanistic content to knowledge and prevents stereotypical perceptions of old age
Emotional-empathic	Ability to empathize, emotional sensitivity, understanding of experiences	Promotes acceptance of the person without judgment or stereotyping
Communicative-activity	Skills of communication, needs assessment, planning and implementation of assistance	Orients towards partnership, respect for choice, and client involvement
Reflexive	Analysis of own attitudes, actions, ethical aspects, and results	Facilitates overcoming stereotypes and development of professional awareness

Source: authors' own elaboration

As shown in Table 2, the value-based attitude towards older generation serves as a cross-cutting foundation of professional readiness. It determines the application of knowledge, the nature of practical actions, the quality of communication, and the level of professional reflection. In its absence, knowledge about ageing remains formal, skills become technocratic, and interaction lacks sufficient sensitivity to the individual needs of older generation .

Therefore, it is essential to define the criteria and indicators of the formation of this attitude, which enables the transition from theoretical description to pedagogical diagnostics and purposeful development within the educational process. The study

identifies motivational-value, cognitive, emotional-empathic, behavioral-activity, and reflexive criteria that align with the structure of professional readiness and specify the manifestations of the value-based attitude (Table 3).

Table 3

Criteria and Indicators of the Formation of the Value-Based Attitude towards Older generation

Criterion	Indicators of Formation
Motivational-value	Interest in working with older generation ; acceptance of values of dignity, respect, and non-discrimination; awareness of the importance of gerontological work
Cognitive	Knowledge of ageing characteristics; understanding of needs, rights, and resources; awareness of ageism and ethical principles
Emotional-empathic	Ability to empathize and show emotional sensitivity; tolerance and readiness for supportive communication
Behavioral-activity	Skills in building partnership interaction; application of ethical communication and non-discriminatory practices
Reflexive	Awareness of one’s own stereotypes; ability to reflect, analyze experience, and engage in professional self-improvement

Source: authors’ own elaboration

The formation of a value-based attitude towards older generation requires a specially organized educational process. It is not sufficient to merely include separate topics on ageing or social services. It is essential to create conditions for personal reflection on old age as a stage of life, analysis of one’s own perceptions, intergenerational dialogue, work with case studies, life stories, and ethical dilemmas. This aligns with research that emphasizes the importance of direct interaction with older generation , gerontology courses, empathy development, practical training, and reflection [1; 2; 8; 14].

At the same time, contact with older generation by itself does not guarantee the formation of a value-based attitude. Without pedagogical reflection and professional discussion, such contact may remain situational or even reinforce stereotypes. Therefore, the educational process must integrate cognitive, value-semantic,

emotional-experiential, activity-practical, and reflexive-evaluative components of value-based attitude formation. The logic of this process is presented in Table 4.

Table 4

Logic of Forming a Value-Based Attitude towards Older Generation in the Educational Process

Level of Formation	Content of Work with Students	Examples of Educational Tasks
Cognitive	Acquisition of knowledge about ageing, needs, rights, and risks	Analysis of sources; study of legislation; short reports
Value-semantic	Awareness of dignity, autonomy, and the significance of older generation	Ethical discussions; case analysis; essays
Emotional-experiential	Development of empathy through interaction and life stories	Interviews; volunteering; intergenerational meetings
Activity-practical	Application of knowledge and values in professional actions	Support plans; role-playing games; case analysis
Reflexive-evaluative	Reflection on attitudes, experience, and changes in perception	Reflective journal; self-assessment; group discussions

Source: authors' own elaboration

The proposed logic of forming a value-based attitude (Table 4) implies that the professional training of future social workers for practice with older generation should be built as a consistent progression: from knowledge about ageing to personal comprehension of old age; from empathic experience to practical action; and from external assimilation of ethical norms to an internal professional-value position. This sequence helps avoid formal assimilation of the topic and ensures a deeper internalization of the values of dignity, autonomy, partnership, and non-discrimination.

Conclusions. The research clarified the essence of the value-based attitude towards older generation as a key component of professional readiness of future social workers. This attitude is defined as an integral personal and professional characteristic that encompasses respect for dignity, recognition of autonomy, life experience, social agency, and the right of older generation to active participation and partnership interaction.



It has been substantiated that the value-based attitude performs integrative and meaning-making functions within the structure of professional readiness, connecting its motivational-value, cognitive, emotional-empathic, communicative-activity, and reflexive components and ensuring a humanistic orientation of professional practice.

The substantive characteristics of this attitude have been specified, and the criteria for its formation (motivational-value, cognitive, emotional-empathic, behavioral-activity, and reflexive) have been identified. These criteria can be used for diagnosing students' professional readiness.

The formation of a value-based attitude requires a specially organized educational process involving gerontological content, analysis of age stereotypes, intergenerational interaction, reflective practices, case studies, volunteering, service-learning, and research activities. Its logic is based on the transition from knowledge about ageing to personal understanding, empathic experience, and the development of a professional value position.

Prospects for further research include the development and validation of diagnostic tools to measure the level of value-based attitude formation, as well as the creation of educational and methodological support for fostering ethical, partnership-oriented, and non-discriminatory readiness of future social workers for practice with older adults.

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