



PSYCHOLOGICAL PREREQUISITES FOR FORMING THE PROFESSIONAL IMAGE OF A CHILD PSYCHOLOGIST IN A DIGITAL ENVIRONMENT

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Abstract

Relevance. The formation of a child psychologist's image in the online environment is an important aspect of modern psychological practice. This is determined by the growing role of digital communications in organizing individuals' lives and professional relationships, as well as the need for practical psychologists to adapt to the expectations of their potential online audience. The aim of this article is to present the results of theoretical justification, empirical research, and the development and testing of effective tools for creating a professional image of a child psychologist in the digital space. The material discusses the results of a study aimed at developing strategies for shaping the professional image of a child psychologist in the digital environment, demonstrates their novelty, and substantiates their practical significance.

Methodology. The main research methods included content analysis of psychologists' professional social media pages, surveys of parents and psychologists, as well as the application of specific psychodiagnostic tools such as the Beck Anxiety Inventory and the Worldview Flexibility Questionnaire.

Results. The obtained results demonstrate the following: for the successful formation of a child psychologist's image, it is important for the specialist to systematically and actively engage with their audience using specific strategies, diverse content, and adhere to ethical standards of online communication. Empathy, low anxiety, worldview flexibility, professionalism, and adapting the content of a professional website to the specific needs of parents and children contribute to increased trust and effective interaction between the child psychologist and their audience. The tested author's training program for child psychologists who aim to develop their professional activities and increase their online visibility and trust from potential clients has proven to be an effective evidence-based practice.

Keywords: psychological practice, child psychologist, professional image, online communication, professional activity strategies

Relevance

Social networks have long become a popular, convenient, and, most importantly, accessible means of communication, information exchange, and searching for modern people. Considering societal changes at global and national levels (the coronavirus pandemic, the full-scale invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation), it can be concluded

that the boundaries between the real and virtual worlds have been erased quickly and naturally. This has also stimulated the development of the image of specialists in various fields, including psychologists, through the Internet and information and communication technologies, among which are social networks such as Facebook, YouTube, X (Twitter), Instagram, TikTok, LinkedIn, Telegram, Pinterest, Reddit, and others. For this reason, the formation of the child psychologist's image in the Internet environment has become an important aspect of optimizing modern psychological practice (Brown, Newman, & Palekha, 2015).

The growing importance of digital communications has created new opportunities for professionals to present themselves, while simultaneously posing a number of challenges for psychologists, particularly the need to adapt their professional competencies to the expectations of an online audience. The relevance of the topic is determined by the increasing demand for child psychologists in modern conditions and the necessity of developing effective tools for establishing trusting and productive interactions with clients through online platforms.

The aim of the article is to present the results of an empirical study focused on developing tools for the effective formation of a child psychologist's image, taking into account the peculiarities of their personal characteristics, the specifics of communication with children and their parents, and the need to build trust through online platforms using interactive client engagement methods.

An analysis of existing scientific works on the formation, correction, and management of the psychologist's professional image confirms the relevance of this topic; however, it still contains a number of unresolved scientific and practical issues, such as ambiguous approaches to defining the concept of image, diagnostic tools for its assessment, measurement of external and internal determinants, and variability in the conditions of its formation.

An additional complexity in forming their own image arises for child psychologists because they do not engage in a simple two-way interaction (psychologist–client), but often face the demands of parents, teachers/caregivers, and in the case of correctional work — also the expectations of speech therapists, defectologists, and others.

Theoretical Background

Summarizing scientific trends regarding the psychologist's image, it should be noted that the image of a child psychologist largely determines the productivity and quality of interactions with children and their parents, as well as with other participants in the educational and/or corrective-developmental process. It also helps define directions for the psychologist's own professional development. This, in turn, creates demand among practicing child psychologists for increasingly effective technologies to improve their professional image, which positively correlates with better outcomes of their work in the future.

In practice, the image is often interpreted as a kind of radical expression of personality traits and communication features formed as a result of professional activity. On social



networks, this is often demonstrated through “good relationships” with clients, family, and close ones, which sometimes leads to a vague or even distorted perception of both the personal and expert components of such a specialist.

From a scientific point of view, the formation of a psychologist’s professional image is inseparable from the concept of psychological readiness for this process. According to T. Lygomiņa, psychological readiness of a specialist is a state of mobilizing all personal resources aimed at creating and maintaining one’s positive image (Lygomiņa T. A., 2020). It is also important to note that the process of creating a personal image stimulates the reassessment of professional achievements and working methods, which subsequently significantly affects the psychologist’s professional activity. By forming their own image, including in the online environment, the psychologist acquires a critically important professional quality — the ability to see themselves from the outside, recognize their weaknesses, and define and adjust their image and vectors of professional improvement.

Since the psychologist’s profession involves constant interaction with people, it is directly proportional to the personal resilience and flexibility of the specialist, as well as their ability to contain emotions and states. For a child psychologist, it is also important to be able to quickly switch between the roles of “adult” and “child.”

An analysis of scientific research shows that certain personal traits play a significant role in the professional activity of a practicing psychologist. Based on the works of scientists such as Zh. Virna, O. Vlasova, H. Katolik, L. Karamushka, S. Maksymenko, Ya. Omelchenko, I. Kornienko, V. Panok, N. Chepeleva, and N. Shevchenko, the most significant characteristics can be identified. These primarily include introspection and professional reflection, self-regulation abilities and high responsibility, clearly defined professional and personal identity, a high level of professional morality and spirituality, as well as professional competence. These qualities are key to the successful practice of a psychologist (Vlasova O.I., 2019; Lygomiņa T.A., 2020).

Studies conducted by researchers from various countries confirm that professionally important qualities of practicing psychologists evolve through postgraduate education, promoting personal development. In particular, changes are observed in aspects such as: restraint transforming into expressiveness, rigidity turning into sensitivity, conservative views yielding to radicalism that includes a tendency to experiment, greater awareness and flexibility, and practicality developing toward creativity. There is also an increase in conformism and anxiety, which may be related to group dynamics, the development of internal psychological conflicts and deficits, as well as changes in the personality’s value-semantic beliefs (Otych O. M., 2021; Johnson, M., 2017; Komar, T., & Vargata, O., 2022).

A child psychologist needs a well-trained attunement to recognizing unconscious aspects of their own psyche to avoid resorting to defensive distortions during complex transference challenges. Otherwise, the specialist remains emotionally and cognitively rigid, insensitive to the full range of the client’s emotional content as well as to their own

behavior motivated by defense mechanisms and unconscious meanings (Lygomina T. A., 2020).

The significance of observing ethical standards in psychologists' activities on the Internet is highlighted in the works of N. Bulatevych and T. Yablonska. Particularly relevant are the basic ethical principles defined by the American Psychological Association's Code of Professional Ethics. These include the specialist's competence, integrity—which implies honesty, fairness, and respect for others—a high level of professionalism, and scientific responsibility. Equally important is a deep respect for the rights and dignity of individuals, concern for their well-being, and the social responsibility of the psychologist (Bulatevych, N., Yablonska, T., 2018).

For example, to adhere to the principle of respect for the client, a psychologist must obtain the client's permission before publicly sharing any case information and/or photo, video, or audio materials. A similar prohibition applies to child psychologists working with children. Demonstrating adherence to the principles of competence, integrity, and professionalism can take the form of posts or short educational videos about the necessary competencies of psychologists and basic rules of professional practice. Such online content has a dual benefit: on the one hand, clients learn the real requirements for psychologists' work and can protect themselves from collaboration with low-qualified specialists; on the other hand, the psychologist, as an expert in the eyes of their audience, remains honest and fair, thereby increasing trust in themselves.

Ethical dilemmas in building a psychologist's image on the Internet include compliance with professional standards in online communication and the risk of conflicts of interest when covering controversial topics. To maintain a positive image in the event of a conflict of interest, it is important first and foremost to respond to negative comments and avoid repetitive, template-like answers.

Furthermore, a psychologist's image online can differ significantly from their offline image due to the peculiarities of online communication and the possibilities offered by digital space. Meanwhile, the online image of a psychologist can have a substantial impact on their practice and client relationships for several reasons. First, it attracts new clients and helps build trusting relationships: a positive online image may attract new clients through high ratings, positive reviews, and impressions created by the content they publish. Second, it influences communication with clients. Through social media, psychologists can establish closer relationships with their audience and foster a sense of support and connection.

Social responsibility also plays a crucial role in forming the image of a child psychologist, as it reflects the psychologist's orientation toward supporting and protecting children's well-being and mental health. Child psychologists can raise public awareness about child development and mental health issues by delivering lectures, seminars, webinars, and other forms of public presentations. They may also participate in developing and implementing educational programs for parents, teachers, and other professionals working with children (Lozova O. M., Tsyganchuk T. V., Lipyanska O. V., Mykolenko N. V., 2022).



Child psychologists can actively demonstrate social responsibility by providing support to children and their families during crisis situations such as divorce, loss of a loved one, trauma, or violence. Their actions in these cases can significantly improve children's psychological state and contribute to their further development. Child psychologists can advocate for openness and understanding regarding mental disorders in children and publicly support initiatives aimed at reducing stigma and increasing the accessibility of mental health care for children and their families. They may also actively participate in social aid projects and volunteer work focused on supporting children from low socioeconomic backgrounds, children with special needs, or those who have experienced traumatic events. The overarching goal of all these suggested actions is to increase trust in child psychologists and to foster a positive professional image of a specialist who not only provides psychological assistance but also cares about the social well-being of children and families.

To build a positive online image of a child psychologist, various tools and strategies can be utilized:

1. Creating a professional website that includes information about services, professional experience, client testimonials, articles on child psychology, and more. The website can serve as the main point of contact for potential clients.

2. Publishing articles, blogs, or other types of content on one's own website or external platforms on topics related to child psychology. This helps demonstrate expertise and deep knowledge in the field.

3. Developing and maintaining active social media profiles on platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter, etc. Social media can be used to engage with the audience, share helpful content, and build a community.

4. Creating video content such as vlogs, parenting advice, educational videos, etc. Videos are a highly effective communication tool that allow psychologists to show their real personality, their interaction style with children and parents, tone of voice, and overall behavior. If the psychologist provides in-office consultations, offering a video tour of the office may also reduce client anxiety before the first session.

5. Participating as a speaker in webinars, conferences, or other events in the field of child psychology. This allows professionals to demonstrate expertise on specific topics, network with peers (thus strengthening their image among colleagues), and interact with parents.

6. Using various forms of online advertising, such as Google Ads or sponsored content on Facebook and Instagram, to promote services and attract new clients.

7. Registering on online platforms for finding psychologists such as Mindly, Hedepy, Rozmova, Pleso, etc. Doing so automatically increases the perceived trustworthiness of the specialist and contributes to forming a positive impression, potentially resulting in more client inquiries (Lolenko, K. M., 2022).

It is essential to choose those tools that work most effectively for the target audience and align with the preferred modes of communication. At the same time, it is important to consider the personal characteristics of the child psychologist, which, in most cases, influence the choice of a specific professional image-building strategy.

We assume that for many child psychologists, developing a professional image in the virtual space poses a significant challenge due to:

- the lack of technical skills such as copywriting, post writing, video recording and editing, basic knowledge of SMM (Social Media Marketing), etc.;
- elevated levels of anxiety and cognitive rigidity;
- fear of not meeting parental expectations regarding the psychologist's persona.

Therefore, the hypothesis of the study is that acquiring the necessary practical knowledge and skills to manage one's social media presence, developing cognitive flexibility, and reducing the specialist's anxiety are the main predictors of building an appealing professional image of a child psychologist in the online environment.

Methodology

Research Methods. To achieve the stated goal, general scientific methods of theoretical research were applied, including analysis, synthesis, comparison, and generalization of scientific literature. In addition, specific psychological methods of data collection were employed: surveys, the use of cinquain, test questionnaires (Beck Anxiety Inventory, Gruzina's Cognitive Flexibility Questionnaire), a formative experiment aimed at optimizing the image of child psychologists in the online environment using a self-developed training program, and mathematical-statistical analysis of the obtained data.

Sample. The research sample included 81 participants divided into two categories: 40 parents of children of various ages and 41 child psychologists representing different therapeutic approaches and levels of professional experience (39 women and 2 men). The age of participating psychologists ranged from 18 to 50 years. Their professional experience varied from 1 year to over 10 years, including:

- approximately 1 year – 27%;
- 1–3 years – 15.2%;
- 3–5 years – 12%;
- 5–10 years – 9%;
- over 10 years – 18.2%.

The research was conducted in three stages: theoretical, empirical-ascertaining, and formative, followed by an evaluation of the effectiveness of the implemented interventions.

During the theoretical stage, the concept of image was explored as both a psychological and social phenomenon, with special attention given to its formation in the digital space, particularly on social media. Conceptual approaches to creating a professional image (symbolic interactionism, social representations, and trust models) were analyzed. Special focus was given to the specifics of forming the image of a child psychologist, taking into account parental expectations and professional requirements.



The empirical part of the study focused on collecting and analyzing factual data concerning the specifics of building the image of a child psychologist in the online environment, as well as testing the training program for developing image-related competencies in the digital space.

The collected data served as the basis for developing a training program and methodological recommendations for child psychologists aiming to improve their online self-presentation. The program is primarily designed for professionals who seek to increase their visibility and the number of client inquiries, as well as those child psychologists who are not yet professionally active on social media but wish to enhance their productivity through organized and effective online engagement.

The developed training program consists of four thematic modules, each of which includes three components:

- Mastering technical knowledge and skills for managing a webpage or social media presence;
- Reducing anxiety levels;
- Enhancing cognitive flexibility.

Each module is designed to be delivered in 3–4 hours of training (excluding breaks). The optimal interval between sessions is one week. As demonstrated during the study, this time frame allows participants to complete homework assignments and thoroughly process new material, thereby reinforcing the skills needed to manage their online presence effectively.

The first substantive module is dedicated to introducing the participants, formulating goals and expectations for the near future, and discussing fears and doubts related to blogging within the group. The main task of the second training module is to familiarize child psychologists with types of image, methods of online advertising, identifying their target audience, and forming a more balanced view of themselves and their activities on the Internet as child psychologists. Methodically, it consists of brief informational messages, metaphorical games, brainstorming, and group discussions. The third substantive block aims primarily at developing creativity and flexibility of thinking in participants, reducing their worldview pessimism, as well as providing information on the practice of composing personal stories (storytelling), since this skill is one of the key ones when managing a professional page by a specialist. The goal of the fourth substantive block is to strengthen participants' confidence in their information-digital competence, overcome corresponding restraint, summarize results, and form prospects for further professional use of internet platforms after completing the training program.

Next, the presented program was piloted with the participation of 10 child psychologists with varying work experience, after which its effectiveness was analyzed and corresponding statistical calculations were made to prove the effectiveness of such group work.

Results

As a result of the theoretical analysis, it was found that the image of a specialist on social networks is not only a means of self-presentation but also an effective tool for attracting an audience and professional development of the specialist. An important outcome of the analysis is also the idea of the particular significance of a child psychologist's adherence to ethical standards, which substantially influences the emergence and maintenance of trust toward such a specialist in the online space.

In solving the task of building an attractive image of oneself as a child psychologist for clients, it is appropriate to highlight the stages that every psychologist faces while working on their professional image (Dialogue: Media Studies, 2018):

At first, the psychologist finds a model, an "ideal" specialist with the help of mass media, colleagues' feedback, opinions of instructors (both at university and in professional development courses), and by comparing and emulating the ideal with oneself (both professionally and personally). At this stage, the first problem arises: new requirements for professional activity and competence in the context of modernizing the education system and views on child upbringing contrast with entrenched, stereotypical perceptions of the image as a secondary factor that has exclusively an external, formal effect and only hinders professional activity.

2. Taking into account socio-psychological influence mechanisms such as suggestion, contagion, persuasion, and emphasizing one's own professional achievements, advantages, and personal strengths. Unfortunately, sometimes this occurs at the expense of criticizing colleagues.

3. At the third stage, having established a connection with the real needs and expectations of their actual and potential clients, the psychologist reviews the techniques and methods used in their work, considering what is popular, which topics provoke stronger reactions, and what clients like or doubt.

4. Making corrections to the existing image as the fourth stage of working on the image deserves no less attention. In this case, the direction of correction depends on how much the clients' requests, who expect to meet with the specialist, coincide with the requests the psychologist would like to work with. This ensures the transition from an idealized self-image to the real construction of one's image as a subject of psychological assistance.

The study revealed that a psychologist's image on the Internet may differ from their image offline for a variety of reasons, the main ones summarized below:

On the Internet, a psychologist can be more accessible and noticeable since the Internet provides the opportunity to reach them from any place with network access. This can attract new clients who are seeking psychological support and assistance.

Clients can leave reviews and ratings on the psychologist's page. Positive reviews can increase trust in the psychologist, while negative ones can harm their image and demand in real practice.



The Internet allows the psychologist to demonstrate their expertise through publications of articles, videos, blogs, etc. This can contribute to increased trust in them as a specialist in their field, while offline activities of the psychologist can only be learned about directly from the specialist.

The psychologist can use social media to interact with the audience and maintain their image. Presence on social networks enables the psychologist to build a community, communicate with clients, and publish useful content that clients will always have access to.

The psychologist also has the opportunity to create and quickly distribute info products (guides, checklists, online masterclasses, and trainings), thus realizing themselves not only as a counseling psychologist but also as a scientist, mentor, thereby gaining popularity and creating a “first contact” with the client even before starting individual work. Moreover, this is significantly cheaper than printing all the aforementioned in paper form. (Zarytska V. V., 2019). As a result of the conducted empirical study, a number of important characteristics and interrelations between them were identified, which influence the formation of a positive image of a child psychologist on the Internet. The study revealed a number of significant features of the online presentation and communication of modern child psychologists related to 1) parents’ expectations regarding the personal and professional characteristics of the child psychologist, 2) the actual individual psychological traits of the practicing psychologists who participated in the study (including the role of anxiety and worldview traits of the specialist, such as pessimism, criticality, or flexibility), as well as 3) their individual strategies of online communication and peculiarities of managing their own Internet pages.

Parents’ expectations towards child psychologists emphasize the importance of professional competence, clarity of content, and availability of emotional support. Parents note the significance of communication style and visual profile design as important factors when choosing a specialist online.

The survey conducted among child psychologists revealed existing difficulties in choosing and implementing effective communication strategies. Most specialists acknowledge the need to improve media skills but experience fear of criticism and apprehension about revealing the imposter phenomenon, which restrains their active presence in the online environment.

A comparison of parents’ expectations and psychologists’ professional perceptions using the cinquain technique showed discrepancies in priorities between these two groups. Psychologists tend to focus on theoretical aspects when building their image, while parents primarily expect practical cases and emotional support from the specialist. This indicates the necessity and importance of child psychologists adapting their professional content to the needs of the audience.

Overall, the results of this part of the study highlight the importance of a flexible approach to building the image of a child psychologist on the Internet. It should be based

on professional competence and take into account parents' expectations regarding emotional support and practical application of knowledge.

Personal characteristics of specialists have a significant influence on their choice of image-building strategies. The study found that parents who seek psychological help for their children want to see qualities in a psychologist such as empathy, openness, professionalism, and communication skills. They note that a personalized approach and interactivity in the child psychologist's online presence contribute to strengthening trust in such a specialist. This underscores the importance of psychologists considering their individual traits in professional self-presentation.

To build a model of personal characteristics of the child psychologist's image successful in using Internet resources, we analyzed heatmaps of the specialists studied, grouping them into two categories: the first group includes those who manage Internet pages, and the second group includes those who do not use social media. Table 1 presents the results of the correlation analysis of indicators of psychologists working on the Internet.

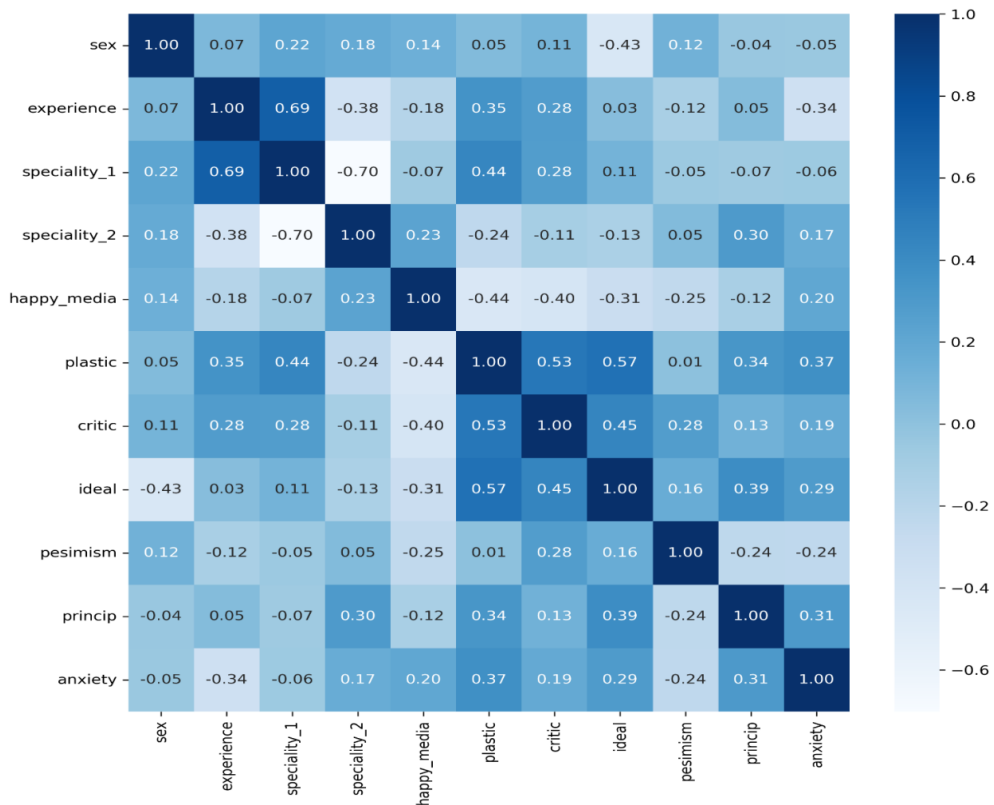
As seen in Table 1, the study revealed a moderate positive correlation between the worldview flexibility of the examined psychologists and their worldview idealism ($r = 0.57$). This indicates that psychologists who manage social media are willing to adjust their self-presentation approach to better align with an ideal image of a psychologist in the eyes of their audience. They may modify their communication style, post topics, and overall image to better meet followers' expectations and create an attractive public persona. This also suggests that respondents who maintain social media tend to have a more optimistic worldview and do not overly focus on life's problems.

These conclusions are further supported by the presence of a moderate positive correlation between their worldview flexibility and the level of worldview criticality ($r = 0.53$), in other words, between their cognitive flexibility and tendency toward critical thinking. Such specialists likely reflect more frequently on the content they create, analyze it to improve and adapt it according to audience demands. This may be part of their self-improvement strategy aimed at increasing popularity on social networks.

Additionally, a moderate positive correlation between worldview flexibility and the psychologists' professional experience was observed ($r = 0.43$). This means that psychologists with more work experience better understand the needs of their audience and learn to align their online presentations with the expectations of potential clients. It should be noted that respondents, as their satisfaction with the quality and results of managing their networks increases, demonstrate a decrease in worldview flexibility ($r = -0.44$). The negative correlation between the willingness to acknowledge positive outcomes of their work and worldview flexibility may indicate that psychologists who try to maintain a positive media image are less willing to change their approaches or discuss difficult issues. Most likely, this group of respondents focuses on maintaining the stability of the chosen positive image and is not inclined to specifically adapt it to the demands of their client audience.



Table 1. Correlational relationships of personal characteristics of child psychologists who maintain social media, revealed in the study.

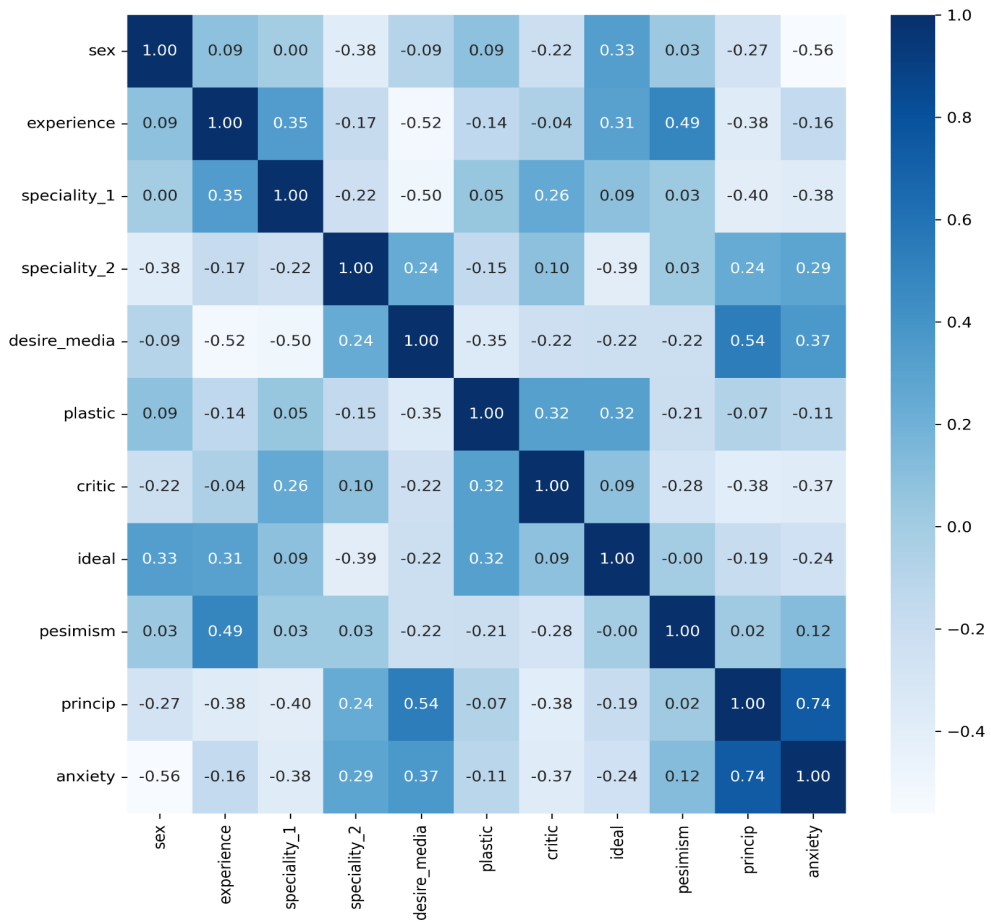


It is also worth noting the revealed negative correlation between anxiety and work experience of child psychologists who use social media ($r = -0.34$), as well as positive correlations of anxiety with worldview flexibility ($r = 0.37$) and principledness ($r = 0.31$), which point to the importance for such individuals of gaining positive experience in managing their image through social networks and the potential of using the latter to reduce anxiety in child psychologists by enabling the formation of an adaptive public image.

In the following Table 2, the pattern of correlation links between the diagnosed variables of psychologists who do not manage social media is presented.

The most noticeable here is the high positive correlation between their principledness and level of anxiety ($r = 0.74$). This may indicate that the activity of such psychologists is more strictly governed by professional standards, which under conditions of modern high uncertainty can cause increased anxiety in the specialist. Presumably, they also change their approaches to organizing professional activity less often and rely on strictly established frameworks, while trying to avoid publicity and the associated public discussion and criticism, which are difficult for specialists to avoid when managing social media.

Table 2. Correlation links of personal characteristics of child psychologists who do not manage social networks



At the same time, the presence of the second strongest correlation between principledness and the desire to master working in the media ($r = 0.54$) indicates a corresponding increase in motivation among this group of specialists for specialized training with an increase in their conscious and conscientious attitude toward fulfilling professional duties.

Additionally, the desire of these specialists to master the practice of working in the online environment is significantly and positively associated with their anxiety ($r = 0.37$) and negatively with the development of critical worldview perception ($r = -0.37$), which confirms our assumption about the presence of an internal personal barrier on the way to mastering professional digital literacy, despite their understanding of the importance of such training.



A moderate positive correlation between the experience of child psychologists who do not manage their work on social networks and worldview pessimism ($r = 0.49$) indicates that more experienced among them tend to have more pessimistic worldview attitudes. Likely, the lack of sufficient contact with their professional and client audience limits their opportunity to receive support and positive feedback from the community in the virtual environment, which, against the backdrop of other life challenges characteristic of contemporary Ukrainian society, does not add optimism to their outlook on life and professional prospects. Conversely, the slight negative correlation between experience and principledness ($r = -0.38$) may indicate that psychologists with more experience focus less on strict principles and may be more open to adaptation, albeit without engaging with the media.

Thus, the analysis of anxiety levels and professional online activity of the psychologists who participated in the study demonstrates that child psychologists with different levels of anxiety use online platforms for professional self-presentation in different ways. Specialists with lower anxiety levels more actively engage online platforms for self-presentation and client outreach. In contrast, psychologists with higher anxiety levels tend to avoid public content and interaction with the audience, which naturally limits their professional presence in the virtual space. The study also identified effective online strategies of child psychologists that contribute to an increase in actual client inquiries, namely:

- regular updates of professional content, including articles, videos, and recommendations for parents;
- use of interactive formats such as live broadcasts, webinars, and Q&A sessions that promote audience engagement;
- development of personalized messages for specific target groups, which enhances communication effectiveness;
- consistent responses to comments on posted materials and active interaction with the audience.

The analysis of the visual content over time on forty-one professional pages of child psychologists who participated in the current study showed that:

- profiles combining personal stories and professional materials received significantly more attention from potential clients;
- the use of graphic elements, infographics, and videos positively influenced the increase of audience interest;
- pages designed in a corporate style, featuring high-quality photos and appropriately demonstrating fragments of the psychologist's work process, foster trust among potential clients.

As noted, based on the results of the empirical study, a training program was developed with the goal of helping child psychologists acquire competencies for building an effective image in the online environment. This included the development of their creative

abilities, strengthening resilience, optimizing personal attitudes towards forming worldview plasticity, and mastering necessary modern tools of psychological assistance for adults and children in solving problems of family socialization and the development of contemporary children.

The criteria for the effectiveness of the formative impact were selected as the characteristics of expressed anxiety and worldview traits of participants in the active psychological training according to the developed program, such as worldview pessimism, criticality, and plasticity, as well as the number of clients who sought help from these child psychologists before and after the training.

The results of the effectiveness of the program trial involving a group of 10 child psychologists are presented in Table 3 (see Table 3).

Table 3. Significance of differences in key indicators of training participants before and after completion (based on Student's t-test)

Indicator	Mean Before Training	Mean After Training	Std. Deviation Before Training	Std. Deviation After Training	t- statistic	p-value
Anxiety Level	26,5	17,5	2,87	2,41	17,41	1.43e-08
Worldview Plasticity	19,5	28,1	1,88	2,41	-17,34	1.48e-08
Worldview Criticality	12,1	14,7	1,10	0,95	-11,44	6.31e-07
Worldview Pessimism	11,5	7,1	1,08	0,99	26,94	6.47e-10
Number of Clients	1,0	3,7	1,05	1,49	-8,06	2.09e-05

The calculations presented in Table 3 statistically confirm the significance of changes in the indicators of training program participants across the given parameters (all p-values < 0.05), specifically noting:

After completing the training, a significant decrease in the average anxiety scores of the studied specialists (by 6 points), compared to their pre-training levels (from 26.5 to 17.5);

An increase resulting from the training of 9 points (19.5 versus 28.1) in their worldview plasticity, a growth of 2.5 points in worldview criticality (12.1 versus 14.7), and a decrease of 4 points in the average scores of worldview pessimism among participants (from 11.5 to 7.1).

Moreover, during the implementation of the program, the average number of clients of its participants increased nearly fourfold (average data: from 1 to 3.7), which clearly indicates the necessity of further use of such a program to enhance the effectiveness of specialists providing psychological assistance to children and their parents.



Thus, we can conclude that the developed training program can be considered an effective tool for improving the productive, emotional, and cognitive aspects of the activities of training participants, as well as for promoting their professional growth and enhancing the quality of the image of a practicing child psychologist.

Discussion

The obtained results are consistent with existing studies in the field of imageology (Smith, Ch., 2024; Lolenko, K. M., 2022; Lygomina T. A., 2020; 2019; Johnson, M., 2017, etc.), confirming the importance of a strategic approach to forming the professional image of a modern specialist. A common conclusion shared by most similar studies, and by us as well, is that the integration of a rational worldview, emotional intelligence, and technological literacy is key to successfully creating and maintaining the image of a psychologist specialist in a virtual environment.

Challenges faced today by child psychologists include the need to balance individual-personal characteristics of such specialists with the professional demands of digital engagement. The data also indicate the necessity to develop stress resilience and adaptability among these psychologists.

Comparison of the obtained results with other research highlights the uniqueness of the developed approach, which focuses on building trust in the audience toward the child psychologist and fostering their adaptation to dynamic changes in the modern digital space, including through mastering productive strategies for providing psychological services to children and their parents.

The study confirmed the importance of a strategic approach to forming the professional image of a child psychologist in the internet environment. Considering that the ability to create a trusting atmosphere and demonstrate professionalism in work are the main predictors of a positive image of such a specialist, child psychologists who have undergone training through the formative program can apply several strategies to maintain and improve their online presentation.

The first of these strategies is the emotional support strategy for potential clients, which aims to build trust in the specialist by providing emotional feedback to parents who turn to the psychologist. As shown by the literature review and the results of parent surveys, children and their parents prefer psychologists who consistently demonstrate empathy and openness. According to Reynolds et al., (2015), an important quality is also the psychologist's ability to support clients experiencing stress or crisis situations, which requires a high level of emotional resilience from the specialist. For effective interaction under such conditions, a child psychologist can use online methods such as active listening and validating the client's emotional state through video or text messages.

Another important strategy that positively supports the psychologist's image is the personalization of interaction with clients, which allows the child psychologist to tailor their services to the specific needs of each family. Image-building specialists emphasize that

personalized content (e.g., individual advice, recommendations, or programs for parents) is one of the most effective ways to increase client engagement online (Johnson, 2017). To implement a personalized approach, child psychologists can actively use webinars, online sessions, and other interactive formats based on monitoring parents' requests to address specific concerns troubling their clients.

Another crucial strategy is the ongoing work of the child psychologist on strengthening their own psychological resilience, as this not only improves their emotional well-being but also enhances professionalism in communication with children and parents (Kohls et al., 2016). Psychologists can develop stress resilience through specialized training, meditation, and relaxation techniques, which promote better emotional control and more effective responses to challenges encountered during online consultations.

An important aspect of maintaining the child psychologist's image is creating visual content that meets the expectations of modern users. Research by Chae (2019) shows that effective visual content combining personal and professional elements helps create a more trusting atmosphere among potential clients. It is evident that psychologists who actively publish useful materials, including videos, infographics, and articles, can significantly grow their audience and attract more clients.

A critically important component for ensuring the productivity of a child psychologist's activity in the online space is the ethical aspect of their work with clients. Adhering to ethical standards and principles of transparency in communication is vital for maintaining client trust. Specifically, research by Black et al. (2018) indicates that ethical violations or insufficient transparency can greatly damage a psychologist's image online and lead to loss of trust among current and potential clients. Considering this, psychologists participating in the developed training program learn to clearly separate professional activity from personal life and to respect client confidentiality.

So, as the results of the training showed, the use of image-building strategies presented by the program by a child psychologist allows such a specialist to create a more attractive positive image in the digital environment, which contributes to both increasing trust in him from clients and his professional development.

Conclusions

The results of the formative study presented in this article allow us to draw the following conclusions:

The image of a specialist on social media is not only a means of self-presentation but also an effective tool for attracting an audience and professional development. Parents seeking psychological help for their children prefer psychologists who demonstrate empathy, openness, professionalism, and strong communication skills. A personalized approach and interactivity in professional activities contribute to strengthening parents' trust in such specialists.

According to the empirical study, psychological resilience and anxiety levels of specialists significantly influence their readiness and ability to effectively form a professional image. The study revealed a connection between the productivity of internet



activity among participating child psychologists and their individual psychological and professional characteristics: psychologists who regularly update their content and interact with clients through comments, Q&A sessions, or live broadcasts create an atmosphere of trust and engagement on their online pages. This fosters the development of a positive professional image and increases client trust.

So, as the results of the training showed, the use of image-building strategies presented by the program by a child psychologist allows such a specialist to create a more attractive positive image in the digital environment, which contributes to both increasing trust in him from clients and his professional development.

Conversely, specialists with higher anxiety and pessimistic attitudes tend to avoid public content and interaction with the audience. They are also less active in using online platforms for self-presentation and client engagement, which naturally limits their professional presence in the virtual space. To optimize the online work of anxious and pessimistic specialists, targeted training programs aimed at reducing stress and increasing their confidence in successfully working on social media should be utilized.

When designing training programs for such groups of child psychologists, it is important to consider the use of textual, visual, and interactive content (videos, infographics, educational publications), which significantly increases the outreach of services and promotes audience engagement. Special attention should be given to creating content tailored to the specific needs of parents and children. It is also important to work on developing their worldview flexibility and self-confidence. A critically important topic is discussing the necessity of adhering to ethical standards in the digital environment, as ensuring transparency in communication, confidentiality, and honesty contributes to improving the specialist's reputation and client trust.

The pilot implementation of the training program for child psychologists on working in the online environment demonstrated significant personal and professional transformations among participants according to the selected criteria relevant to the research problem. The experience of creating a personalized image that reflects the uniqueness of the specialist is capable of increasing interest in the specialist and client trust, thereby increasing client numbers. Combining the demonstration of professional achievements, accessibility, and humanity becomes the key to successful interaction with clients online. Overall, the chosen methodological approach significantly improves the professional image of child psychologists, helps them attract new clients, and fosters trust between the specialist and their audience. These results allow us to confirm the research hypothesis that was put forward as the purpose of the study.

Future research on this topic will focus on the dynamics of changes in the digital environment and the new challenges that arise for child psychologists as a result. Building a positive image on the Internet not only facilitates the attraction of new clients but also enhances the professional development and recognition of specialists within the psychological community. It is also important to consider the long-term impact of the

image-building strategies used in practice on the professional growth of the child psychologists who participated in the study.

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