

The Experience of Calling: Educational Aspects and Cross-Cultural Comparisons

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The presented study of the phenomenon of calling in educational aspects is based on the results of the research accomplished in Ukraine in 2016. Calling experience of secondary school pupils and university students as well as of school teachers was examined in the surveys and in-depth interviews. Calling as a phenomenon appears to have the following structure: Desire — Talent — Realization — Social or Spiritual Benefit. The aim of transpersonal goodness is the core of the phenomenon of calling and gives the integrity of its structure. The presented research in Ukraine mainly supports the results of the American research of calling for teaching performed at Liberty University, USA, in 2008. However, some cultural differences were revealed and analyzed.

Key Words: phenomenon of calling, lived experience, self-actualization, career choice, responsibility, social and spiritual benefit, goodness, morality, ethics, teaching

Introduction

Calling as a basic cultural phenomenon was positioned in the social thought of 20th century by Max Weber due to his researches of social and economic history, politics and studies of religion [Weber, 1980; Weber, 1952]. Weber's concept of calling was developed in particular within the analyses of Protestant ethics and evolution of capitalism [Weber, 1963]. The German philosopher and sociologist analyzed the process of secularization of calling from the initial religious tradition and its transition into the ethics of profession spread in the Western countries' culture. It is clear that at the beginning of 21st century calling is a relevant idea for the Western Christian countries [Bigham & Smith, 2008: 9], but there is a question if it is actually vital in the other cultures.

The presence of the idea of calling in the contemporary Ukrainian society is not sufficiently researched. Calling belongs to romantic and religious tradition and it is important to know its role as a motivating factor in a rather secularized pragmatic world. Moreover, the reception of well-known cultural ideas and practices in the course of social transformation, as it is in Ukraine, could be complicated. Ukrainian scholars pay attention to hybridization as a global cultural trend: "For the globalization unprecedentedly opens opportunities for a meeting of unmeetable and so often unmatchable phenomena" [Gomilko et al, 2016: 178]. That is why it is necessary to find out how specific is the existence of the phenomenon of calling in the consciousness of Ukrainians. A particular interest presents the significance of calling in choosing and practice of profession in education. Teaching in Ukraine is definitely underpaid, its pres-

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tige is rather imaginary than real. We have a shortage of teachers in some regions especially rural. Many successful students of pedagogic professions prefer to get other jobs. Pupils at schools do not often feel that their teachers are motivated to work and are not motivated for learning themselves. Nevertheless, the moral aspects of the motivation for the profession are highly important. An honest work in various fields often requires a kind of devotion. It is true that the salaries from the state budget in Ukraine hardly cover the living expenses of teachers and people of many other jobs as well. We do not expect a fast improvement of the situation. Thus the topic of calling is maybe more important in Ukraine than it is in the other countries.

Methodology

The origin of this study is the author's metaphysic wonder of calling. Wherefrom comes the call we do not know exactly for sometimes it is from outside and sometimes it is intrinsic or both directions are present in our consciousness. Still we live in a responsive way and the most important is how we respond. There is a kind of hermeneutics behind every philosophic question and a big deal for ethics concerning many human deeds. Although we cannot know exactly the principal things in our life, we need to understand them.

As for our research, hermeneutic phenomenology is a method and a strategy of thinking. The way we have got the experience of calling revealed is in-depth interviewing. When conducting an interview we are asking, hearing and speaking to our interviewee. We reconstruct and repeat what we have got from our interlocutor to bring the phenomenon of calling into the light of understanding. The in-depth interviews were preceded by target surveys to get some statistics about the factors of choosing future professions and about the share of those who declare having the experience of calling. That gives a piece of solid social reality for the represented phenomenon.

There were conducted 2 target surveys in Kyiv, Ukraine in April and May 2016. The first was of 105 pupils of the 10th year of study from 2 Kyiv secondary schools. The second was of 90 students from National Pedagogical Dragomanov University, 10 of them were subsequently chosen to be the participants of the following in-depth interviews. In August 2016 were done 5 interviews with Kyiv school teachers chosen according to the references of their colleagues and pupil's parents. All the process of interviews was agreed with faculty and administrations except teachers who were asked in private.

The results of the surveys

Secondary school pupils

At present, there is an 11-year secondary school education system in Ukraine. We held a poll of the 10th form pupils just in the end of the school year. Before the last year at school, they were ready to speak about their future. The respondents answered whether they have chosen their profession, what is the role of their relatives in their choice, what are their motives, do they feel a call for any kind of work, and is it at all necessary for a profession to coincide with a personal calling.

General ideas of secondary school pupils about their future professions:

1. At least 90% of pupils of the capital city of Ukraine are going to get their future professions at the universities and colleges.

2. At least 50% of them before their last year at school have decided what profession they would like to get.

3. 30% of all respondents are going to choose the professions of their parents or close relatives.

Motivation for the professional choice:

1. 70% of respondents are motivated by monetary gain of their future profession.

2. Almost the same, up to 70%, are looking for their personal development in the profession.

3. 30% of pupils think about social prestige of the profession.

4. The same quantity, 30%, thinks that their future work should give them the convenient surrounding of alike-minded people.

5. 30% declared that the main thing for them is a sphere or content of their job.

6. About 30-35% said that they want to serve society or some good purpose in the world.

Personal experience of calling:

1. 33% of pupils declared that they feel a calling for their future profession or for some other kind of occupation in their life.

2. 54% were not sure about what is their calling.

3. 13% answered that they have no feeling or understanding of calling at all.

Attitudes towards calling and professions:

1. At least 50% of respondents said that it is important to choose a profession according to one's calling.

2. However, 45% said that calling and profession should not necessary coincide.

3. 5% were not able to give their opinion about it.

The results show that every third of 16-17 years old school youth in Ukraine knows what his or her calling is. Not less than 50% of them declare that calling is a base for their future profession choice. 30-35% of respondents have rather altruistic or moral intention for goodness when think of their future occupation. Overall, calling is a relevant idea for Ukrainian youth.

University students

90 students of a National Pedagogical Dragomanov University in Ukraine were polled during April and May 2016. The students were asked if they have plans to go for teaching profession after the university, do they have relatives who are teachers or educators, is it their first profession, what are their motives of choosing their present place of study, what are their internal and external reasons to became teachers, do they feel a calling for the teaching work, is it at all necessary for a profession to coincide with a personal calling.

The intention of education at the chosen university is mainly teaching. Nevertheless, along with teaching qualification students can get other kinds of professions like an interpreter, editor, social worker, university lecturer, etc. That is important for understanding of the obtained data.

Vision about future profession:

1. 23% are going to teach after university.

2. 40% are not sure if they are going to teach.

3. 37% are not going to be teachers.

Reasons for study at the university:

1. 25% are interested to get a teaching profession.
 2. 65% have come to the university to study a specific subject like languages, philosophy, etc. without a direct aim to become teachers.
 3. 10% have no definite interest in any kind of profession. Their department and the university were just a place where they went after school.
- Only 3% had another profession before the university.

External motivation for teaching profession:

1. 15% think that long-term summer vacation is an important benefit.
2. 6% reckon that teaching gives respect and prestige in the society.
3. 21% see the possibilities of additional earnings along with school lessons as a benefit of teaching.

Overall, the respondents who are going to be teachers do not see much of external benefits of this profession.

Internal motivation for teaching profession:

1. 60% of future teachers would like to work and communicate with children whatever subject it is.
2. 35% would like to teach and educate youth.
3. 29% want to benefit society and serve others.
4. 18% declare a spiritual calling for goodness.
5. 17% first of all like their special subject of teaching.
6. 3% have a religious calling for teaching.

Calling to teaching profession:

1. 25% of the respondents are sure of being called to teach.
2. 52% cannot say if they have or do not have a calling for teaching.
3. 23% of the respondents state definitely that they do not feel any calling for pedagogics.

General attitude towards calling:

1. 50% of respondents say that it is necessarily to choose a profession according to own calling.
2. For 20% it is desirable, but not necessary, to combine calling and profession.
3. 30% think that calling can be fully realized beyond the profession.

The results of the survey show that pedagogic university students in Ukraine have various reasons to study and not so many of them, about 25%, would like to become teachers. Relatively more, namely 33%, of senior pupils at schools appeared to know their callings. That means that pedagogic universities in Ukraine are not exactly focused on pedagogics. They offer a big variety of professions in order to get sufficient number of students. Therefore, for the significant part of the students teaching career is not the aim of their study. Nevertheless, for more than a half, up to 70%, of students calling is a really important motivating factor whether for teaching, or for another job.

In-depth interviews about calling

Ten students of the pedagogic university were invited for the individual interviews that took place at H. Skovoroda Institute of Philosophy of National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine in May and June 2016. The students were from various departments: 5 were linguistics and literature students, 2 were students of social psychology and social management and 3 were students of philosophy, religion and social science. All the participants were going to become teachers or educators in some perspective and declared their feeling or understanding of calling. They were in the end of the 3rd year of study at the university. 8 were female, 2 male, age 19-21 years old. The interviewees came to the university from the various parts of Ukraine. 5 teachers from Kyiv schools were also asked for the interviews in August 2016. The interviews were at places convenient for every teacher, mainly at their school or at H. Skovoroda Institute of Philosophy of National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine.

All the interviews were audio recorded and later transcribed. In the process of analyses, the main themes were selected from each interview with reduction of non-relevant pieces. The consistent statements and general themes were repeatedly reflected on and analyzed. The individual differences of the experiences were not lost though. Every interview gives the unique appearance of the phenomenon of calling and personal attitudes towards it. The experience of everyone worth to write a special short story, but we have no room for it in this article. All the names of the students and teachers are changed in this article, except one teacher who wanted a real name to be left.

The interview guide for teachers was not significantly different from the students' guide. I asked the students and teachers how did they come to their career choice, what they liked to do at schools and how it became clear for them what to do in their life. Then the theme was the understanding of calling, ethical and other problems on the way of its realization. In the end, we discussed the meaning of calling for pedagogic profession.

The results of the interviews and their interpretation can be divided by 5 main blocks:

1. Decision to come to pedagogic university and chose a teaching profession.
2. Religion and spirituality as motivating factors of the career choice.
3. The definitions and the structure of the phenomenon of calling.
4. Calling and morality.
5. Calling in the practice of teaching.

1. Decision to come to pedagogic university and chose a teaching profession

Teachers in families

Presence of teachers among family members is an important factor for positive attitude to pedagogic profession. In our target survey 44% of students answered that they were from teacher's families. Accordingly, in the sample for the further interviews 5 of 10 students and 2 of 5 teachers appeared to have relatives in education. Some of them consciously followed the careers of their family members or tried to do what their mothers or fathers had not realized in their own lives. Actually, children or grandchildren from teachers' or professors' families were not often persuaded to go the way of their elder relatives. It was rather a matter of example or the atmosphere at home that influenced the younger generation. Even more, students appreciated that their families let them make their own choice.

Good examples or good advice beyond a family

Students and teachers often said that they wanted to be like some of their own teachers or professors. A good example of a school teacher sometimes was more important than the influence of the family in a career decision. Loved teacher was a source of inspiration to come to the university and study his or her favorite subject or just to become an educator. For the part of the students, favorite professors at the university were the source of strengthening of their own professional choice. Some interviewees also told that they got a piece of a career advice from a psychologist or a teacher in their school years. The acknowledgement of person's gifts and abilities to do something specific received from other people was an important support often needed for making a career choice. Usually it was a kind of specification in the favorite field of activity of the person.

Desire to make a difference

It is rather not a typical motivation, but two students and one teacher said that seeing many wrong examples of the way of teaching at their schools they wanted to be opposite, to become teachers of some new kind. They wanted to change the system and routine of education and bring creativity, helpfulness, liberty to school life.

Previous pedagogic experience or an interest in a specific sphere of knowledge

Many of interviewees said that they decided to become teachers because of their own teaching experience at school or at the university. They had a pedagogic practice, taught some lessons, led other school activities, took care about their younger schoolmates and they liked it. Many students, however, came to the university just to study their favorite subject. Only after a pedagogic practice and getting more knowledge of their field, some of them for the first time understood that they would like to be teachers.

Disposition to teach and grow younger generation

A really often explanation of the choice of a teaching career is love to children. The majority of students and teachers told that they had always enjoyed being with children and therefore they would love to teach and grow up the youth.

Disposition to work with children and interest in some subject for teaching were in many cases more important than every kind of suggestions of families or the other people's positive or negative examples. Following what one likes to do or to be is a way to the right career decision and it appears to be the first trait of a calling.

2. Religion and spirituality as motivating factors of the career choice

5 of 10 student interviewees were believers of different kinds and depth of involvement in a religious life. 3 were Orthodox Christians, 1 was a believer of a new kind close to Protestantism and 1 was rather an intellectual believer without any church belonging. The first 3 students acknowledged the importance of religion for their disposition to help and care about people. Consequently, that led them to their profession. It is remarkable that the next person who was specially inclined to explain all her activities via God's will did not have a direct aim to become a teacher. Her lifeway is not focused on some specific activity. The last of the 5, an "agnostic" believer as he named himself, does not see any link of religion and calling. Religion for him is a kind of a transpersonal philosophic belief, while calling is a rather individual necessity.

The dominating way of thinking about religion and calling of our interviewees could be reconstructed like that: even when one believes in God, he or she thinks that the choice of a profession is rather a matter of personal feeling or reasoning. The higher power is literally “higher” than the level of individual preferences. Even if everything happens by God’s will, one cannot know that will to the end. Believers understand that higher religious guidance as an implicit process and they just hope for God’s help on their lifeway. To specify that, I am giving the words of one student: “If God brought me to the profession, He would help me to cope with all the difficulties of that work.”

Spiritual motivation for the choice of profession is more common than religious one. Students can understand spirituality as an internal faith, personal convictions or moral values that motivate their actions more than material needs. However, not so many young people use the notion of spirituality to explain their motivation. There is a kind of skepticism towards worn moralist words and towards the variety of modern quasi-religious practices in Ukraine. Out of 5 students, who were religious believers, only 1 said that religion and spirituality is the same.

For the majority of students the choice of their profession was caused by personal feelings and understanding, or it was a result of the influence of their family, teachers and other circumstances. Ukrainian students would rather see their future from the starting point of the desire, responsibility and courage. Nevertheless, some of them would accept that their lifeway is not only in their own hands or just subordinated to the society, but there is a higher power of Providence beyond their considerations.

Anyway, all those who declare the feeling of calling think that it is not accidental, that it has a special meaning in their lives. Calling reveals the need of fulfilment and living a useful life.

3. The definitions and the structure of the phenomenon of calling

Actually, students and teachers could explain their motivation of career choice using various terms and not necessarily “calling”, but when asked they would readily interpret their experience as a calling. For some of students who had difficulties to formulate their own notion of calling was given the definition: “A career that is not motivated by monetary gain or is for the betterment of society or the good work of a higher power is considered a calling” [Colozzi & Colozzi, 2000]. One of the Ukrainian students, Paola, put it in the same words: “Calling is what one wants to do paying no regard to material benefits of it.”

Many students inclined to interpret calling as a “congenial work.” The doctrine of “congenial work” belongs to the famous Ukrainian peripatetic philosopher of 18th century Hryhory Skovoroda. “The only way to happiness is to follow your heart and do what is congenial to you”, taught the philosopher. His motto was Socratic: “Know thyself” [Skovoroda, 1994]. As Skovoroda’s philosophy is familiar to Ukrainian students, the “congenial work” is a paradigm of the understanding of calling for many of them.

Nevertheless, we tried to go further and get more specific definitions, which allowed us to see the diversity of the experiences. The obtained definitions could be classified by their intentions: 1) self-actualization, 2) socialization, 3) transcendence. Actually, it was possible and even inevitable to combine two or three of those intentions, but one of them would prevail for every person.

Self-actualization means calling for self-fulfillment. It can be shown in the words of the interviewees. Student Helen defines: “Calling is what one is interested in and what one succeeds in, because one has got ability to it.” There can be also a self-manifestation aspect, namely to

do what is congenial for a person. Another student, Mary, says: "Calling is when one wasn't taught specially to do something, but it comes out good and easy for him or her." One reveals an intuitive competence in something, can do it naturally. It is a kind of being a true yourself. It could also appear like student Andrew states: "Calling is when one understands about some work or activity that one just wants doing it and at the same time cannot do anything else." It is rather emotional statement, although there has to be a moment of conscious decision to go for what one wants instead what gives one more benefits that are external. Moreover, it is not about a realization of all gifts, because one may have many of them, but just a single calling. Another interviewee, Faina, would add that calling holds one not in a sense of obsession, but as something fascinating. It is when one does not want to divert of something, can do it hourly.

Self-actualization is driven by desire and will of realization of personal abilities. According to student Tanya, "Calling is a steady desire that needs its realization." It is not necessarily an egoistic intention. Calling even obligates one to develop his or her talents and socializes the person. *Socializing orientation* of calling means that one wants to help other people or to serve for betterment of society. Helping people is an internal conviction and a pleasure at the same time. Christina says: "Calling is to help people and get satisfaction of that." The other student, John, agrees: "Calling is an activity that brings you happiness and benefits the society." Those two sides, happiness and social benefit, cannot be separated when it is a calling. Therefore, the formula of calling looks like that: *Desire — Talent — Realization — Social Benefit*. If one does something only for oneself without any obvious or at least indirect benefit for other people or society he or she will not prove that it is a calling. That line can be easily extended to transcendental motivation.

Transcendental intention means calling for the higher purpose such as God's will or goodness itself. It also means that personal actions are not confined to the limits of human life and society. Religious motivation is the first example. It prompts one rather to rely upon God's will than on own understanding. Student Jane says: "Calling is a purpose which God intended for me." She prays God: "If Thou created me than lead me where Thou will, because I do not know myself entirely." The second example is a motivation on the base of regulative idea of infinite spiritual development. There are ideas about the purpose of life, values, virtues that give direction without limits. The commandments from the Bible or the non-religious "spiritual" aims of service for goodness in the world are the ways of transcendence. Therefore, the religious or spiritual construct of calling is: *Faith — Gifts — Deeds — Religious or Spiritual Benefit*. One has to realize one's faith using one's gifts for God's sake or for the sake of the idea of goodness to prove that it is a calling.

4. Calling and morality

Actually calling appears as a living for a good purpose or for a good idea. Nobody would consider own calling as a bad one. Calling requires moral virtues such as devoutness, courage, responsibility, patience, tolerance. They are important not only to realize calling, but also to weigh it towards the other obligations. Calling itself obligates. "If it is a calling, one has to follow it, to fight for it to the last possibility", says Helen. I asked: "Can one betray one's calling?" The answer of student Andrew was: "Nobody swears about calling and therefore cannot betray it. One should not forget his or her calling, but that is a right of a person to decide what is more important." Generally, more important are duties towards family, defense of own country, etc. Still, common is a position that one should seek the balance or at least keep

a link with calling when cannot realize it for some time. Moreover, only those who are able to meet their obligations prove themselves as a mature people. Obligations are mainly social, whereas calling is personal. One must combine those social and personal levels. Responsibility enriches person and adds a value to the life in calling.

Morality cannot compel one to a calling. If not an existential anxiety, it could be enough for the person to live according to morality and other obligations. Morality in turn makes living in calling complicated. It can even conflict with a calling. Sometimes the calling of a person looks unacceptable for the other people, whereas one does not see any harm in it. For example, a tattoo master thinks that he is a man of art and makes his customers happy, but other people would think that tattooing is a wrong thing. Still there could be more destructive affections, obviously harmful to the society. I had a provocative question: “*Is it possible to get a calling for evil?*” To my surprise, I got once an affirmative opinion. One student gave an example: there are people who like to kill or who are naturally aggressive. If there is no war, they go hunting, go to police service, or realize their passion another way. However, having found their place in the structure of the society, they could fulfil some useful function. I asked: “What makes a calling of such a passion?” The answer was: “constancy, persistency, inevitability.” One feels that was born to it and realize oneself in it. One does not think of doing something evil for the sake of evil. Such a person just does what is natural to him or her. Idea that calling is natural seems to be a core of that student’s obviously mistakable opinion. Calling is not natural. It is human and humanity is more than natural. *Calling is not subconscious*. Evidently, we need to gain an external benefit, to socialize, to serve a good purpose, or at least hope for beneficial consequences of our actions. Even that naturally cruel activity from student’s example becomes in fact positive and righteous if it serves and benefits the society.

Mainly participant students and teachers rejected the link of calling with evil at all. Calling cannot be demonic or diabolic. The interweaving of personal intentions with social evaluation and transcendental values with social benefits protects calling from being morally wrong or a mistaken. Nobody would think of calling contrary to the benefit of the other people. The obvious question about egoism of calling meets the answer that calling helps one to do the best and so to be useful in the society. Calling could look selfish only from some particular point of view, for example, for members of the family, etc. However, many think that successful people benefit the society and harmonize their surroundings. In the society a kind of a balance of various personal callings is possible. Social structure of professions correlates morality and calling. Robert K. Merton said: “What, then, seems to be involved in the widespread push of professionalization? ... First, the value placed upon systematic knowledge and the intellect: knowing. Second, the value placed upon technical skill and trained capacity: doing. Third, the value placed upon putting this conjoint knowledge and skill to work in the service of others: helping. It is these three values as fused into the concept of a profession that enlists the respect of men.” Therefore, “social invention of the professions institutionalizes altruistic behavior. The profession does not require practitioners to *feel* altruistic (although that might do no harm); it only requires them to *act* altruistically (at least to a substantial degree)” [Merton, 1960: 9, 11].

Good and beneficial aim makes the feeling of true calling and unites it with morality. Whereas calling and morality are of different origin, the first is rather personal and the last is social, both need a transcendental horizon of goodness. Maybe that is a point where individual pleasure meets justice, personal right becomes righteous.

We have got to add just a few moralistic theses to the topic calling. Who thinks to be called or have a calling should be able to hear oneself, the other people, and maybe the higher level

than just a man. To some extent, hearing is also opposite to calling. Obedience is a great moral and religious virtue that sometimes prevents from persistence on personal calling. As for Christians it is definitely not a new thought. That is how we can understand the double nature of calling according to Hryhory Skovoroda. The philosopher said about the task to combine a personal inclination to some work and the general aim of looking for the kingdom of God: "Happy is a man who combined his sweetheart working with the general one" [Skovoroda, 1994: 116]. So that the general calling is what everyone obligated to and the personal calling is what an individual able to fulfill. We would add 2 more virtues and vices that are important or harmful for calling. The virtues are love and wisdom. The vices are laziness and fear. Virtues can help to get a balance in our life. Vices prevent from fulfillment our calling.

To sum up the ethical part, calling itself has a transpersonal benefit as its aim. Therefore, the external to individualistic point of view on calling is possible and necessary. That is why there is a room for an ethical reflection about calling,

5. Calling in the practice of teaching

Teaching as a calling

Teaching is not entirely a dynastic profession. Although every 2 of 3 students in our target survey who said that they feel a calling for teaching were from pedagogic families, at least 1 of 3 came from the other surrounding. Teaching is not a destiny. It is a calling. Why calling is so important for teaching? Because on teacher's work depends the future generations of people. Teacher is involved in a twofold process of "1) education as a purposeful cognitional activity of gaining knowledge, abilities, and skills and their improvement, 2) upbringing as a purposeful methodical forming of proper features of a person..." [Beregova, 2016: 36] The result is a social maturity, responsibility, creativity of young people. For the development of the personality of pupils a kind of caring is expected from teachers. It is impossible without an internal motivation of calling.

Calling requires self-development from a teacher and makes him or her able to develop youth, otherwise a teacher is a cause of degradation and lost interest of pupils to study. As for every other profession, for teaching is true what our interviewee-students stated. For example, Jane said: "The work in calling is creating and the work without calling is ruining of oneself and others." Mary reasoned: "By calling one brings harmony. One acts with love." John noted that, "working by calling one gets moral satisfaction, joy and gives the same to the others."

Calling is responding. A called person is responsible for the profession and for the others who involved in it, teacher is responsible for pupils. Let us get again to our students' opinions. Daria: "If I become a good teacher, it means that I will realize my calling and I will have a responsibility for my profession and for the children." Faina said: "We do not need even to say "calling" when we mean responsibility, ability to do something really good and to overcome difficulties. That is just a human life." Is it enough to be just a responsible professional without a calling for teaching? Not at all! Our interviewees would not agree that calling is no use at schools.

Do we have to demand any evidences of calling from teachers? Formally, we do not need such a requirement. Fortunately, there is a kind of natural selection at schools: not so many teachers can stand the difficulties of the profession without a calling. Those who see that they are not happy with that job usually quit teaching after the first years of practice. It is a common response from teachers we interviewed: teaching without a calling cannot be an attracting

profession. One of our students, Tanya, says expressively: “Work with children is a nightmare without a calling.” For those lazy and passive people who would have stayed in teaching job the assessment procedures would be a peril. Actually, they never have good results at their work. Teaching, when it is really successful, is not only a profession. It involves all the personality of an educator. Just having skills is not enough. “One can get all the certificates, pass all the exams, but his or her lessons are unbearable”, student Andrew says from his school experience. Why? Because there has to be something more than formal responsibilities in teaching, something personal and even transcendental what we try to catch in the word “calling”.

Calling cannot be measured and certified. It is even unethical to require proofs of calling from candidate for a job, because calling is free and because the person who enters the profession should have a credit of time and chance to try it. To add more, at the low level of salaries at schools we mostly have teachers by calling, because they survive the difficulties. We would say nothing about the minority of those who do not do their work honestly. However, when we try on calling every beginning teacher we will never have a sufficient amount of teachers at schools.

Actually, it is not so hard to see who is called to teach. The first indicator is pupil’s behavior. If they feel respect for themselves and respect a teacher, if they have an interest for learning, if they are responsive that is an evidence of teacher’s disposition to the educational subject and teaching as well. Such a teachers are those whom everyone remembers and whom everyone grateful from schooldays. They are examples to follow in every school. Called person brings more than required to his or her work, does more than it is paid for, because needs it not for money first of all. In teaching it means do not stick at formal programs and plans, but create, give own sole to it. The passion and joy of teacher’s work is evident. It fulfills and it is catching. It passes to others and brings happiness.

Teachers’ experience

We would like to add some findings from 5 interviews with teachers. Actually, they were 4 teachers and 1 school psychologist. The main things we had understood with students did not change after the interviews with teachers. We just tried to catch the wisdom of experienced people and add it to the whole picture.

Iryna, a teacher of elementary school, is 25 years in profession. Her sense of profession: “I am working, because it is mine. I get used to it, I like it and I just cannot be without it.” The difficulties of the profession do not overweight a satisfaction that Iryna gets from teaching. Those flashes of inspiration, desire to give something special to pupils, to teach them thinking, to evoke their creativity supports the teacher in her work. The work holds her. Her thoughts are busy after working hours. She thinks about her work, her pupils. Still, it fulfills her, gives her wings.

The phenomenon of calling for Iryna is both internal and external: “That is not just our own device. We feel a push for it from outside.” Mainly calling is a matter of self-actualization. For the person it brings happiness up to the end of the life, but loftily speaking it is also a mission. Her calling is for people, not the deeds, but people call. The teacher sees the faces of children in her mind and they inspire her to stay in profession, to respond them with her devotion.

Yevhen, 13 years in teaching of English, is looking at calling as a way of honest life. Children will not allow one to lie. Knowledge that teacher gives is not just a bunch of facts on a subject, but it is a way to know the world and oneself. Moreover, it is a kind of attitude to life: be conscious, know thyself, be responsible, and bring benefit to the world. That starts from school.

“*Teacher’s calling is to bring young people to their callings*”, that is how we understand Yevhen. That is the core of the teacher’s mission in the world. If one is called to teach, he or she leads young generation by the way of knowledge and prompts them to be mature, responsible and beneficial citizens. That is a way to make young people happy in their lives.

Therefore, to be a teacher is a different thing than just to have a teacher’s job. Teaching is a way of living when internal work never stops.

Svitlana has been a teacher of Ukrainian language and literature for 30 years. Teaching is a task not only to help young people find their own ways, but also to show those ways in purpose, to give the direction in the society, even to make them patriots of their land and culture. Black weekdays are shined for the teacher by the asterisks of children’s success, because everyone has own talent.

“For Ukrainians calling is what they feel by heart and then recognize in mind”, says *Svitlana*. Teacher is called to bring goodness and knowledge into the world. Teacher’s calling is permanent development in order to develop others. “Teacher is a perpetual pupil.”

Laura is a teacher of arts and social educator at school. For 32 years she has been in education starting from a day nursery and then working at school. Calling for her is an internal flame that she carries all the life. It can be strong or weak sometimes, but it cannot extinguish. Whatever various it is or looks like, in its essence it is the same. Calling always finds its way of realization and influences the surrounding. It is holistic. Thus, *Laura*’s gift for painting is not a hobby or just a tool for a lesson. It is a part of educating process and her art-therapy.

For the educator calling is a passion to help people and a will to achieve a positive result, because the result is a benefit for the life of children and their families. Educator has to be a winner, not a dominator, but a strong person able to take risk and to achieve goals. Teaching a-priori serves good purposes, for education cannot be evil in essence.

Caroline has been working at school for a one and a half year. She is a psychologist doing her PhD project. A career consultancy or vocational guidance is a part of her work with pupils. *Caroline* says that she does not teach, but she guides. As a psychologist, she likes bringing people to their own right solutions.

Her calling as an educator and a school psychologist is to help young people to realize themselves and to find out what they like to do and to be. “All the taste of life, its beauty and diversity is what one called for. Still, it is one’s choice to go for it or do not go. We cannot drive one into a calling”, says *Caroline*.

Comparisons with the results of Jared T. Bigham’s research “Role of Spirituality in Persons Choosing a Career in Education: Calling as a Motivating Factor”

One of the sources of inspiration for the presented research was the article of Jared Bigham and Samuel Smith “Called to Teach: Interpreting the Phenomenon of Calling as a Motivating Factor” [Bigham & Smith, 2008]. Thanks to Prof. Samuel J. Smith, I got the manuscript of Jared Bigham’s dissertation and thus the possibility to know about that research in the details. With my own research, I am answering the call of Bigham to conduct the similar study in a different environment. Here is just a brief comparison of the results. To begin with the differences, my research was not about the role of spirituality in choosing of teaching profession. It was first of all about the phenomenon of calling itself. The samples for the interviews were

also different. The pupils, students, and teachers were from secular educational institutions. The cultural background was different too. Ukraine is a Christian country, but mainly Orthodox, where Protestant and Catholic denominations are rather minorities. The everyday life of Ukrainians flows mainly in a secular surrounding. Religion is a rather good old tradition for the most part. We conducted a quantitative research to confirm that the idea of calling is in the trend of Ukrainian school and university youth's vision of their future work and life. We have also done 5 interviews with teachers to deepen and validate our knowledge from student's interviews. That was not in the frame of the referred American research. Anyway, it is interesting to sum up what we have got in common and what actually differs.

The reasons for the choice of teaching profession and the spread of the idea of calling could be different in Ukraine and in the USA, but we would not compare the exact shares of opinions. We just state that there is a phenomenon of calling in Ukraine. We have got various evidences of vocational motivation in our research. For instance, about 30-35% of school pupil youth feel a calling for their future profession or for some other kind of occupation in their life and state their will to serve society or some good purpose in the world. As for pedagogic university students it appears that 60% of them would like to work and communicate with children, 35% would like to teach and educate youth, 29% want to benefit society and serve others and 18% feel a spiritual calling for goodness. For more than a half of Ukrainian school and student youth, it is important to choose a career according to calling.

All in all the phenomenon of calling appears the same in such different countries like Ukraine and the USA. It emerges in the process of understanding and interpretation of personal experience and is rather not just a single event of revelation. Although there can be some special events and sparks of inspiration that further interpretation recognizes as a calling. The American and Ukrainian students also generally accept the idea of passion for something and of gifts as the base of calling. In our research, we have also got opinions of the part of students and teachers that God gives talents and the person is free to develop them or not. The common understanding of calling as caring for social and spiritual benefit is also supported by our comparison. We got the same evidence of the dynamics of intrinsic force and external pull in the construct of calling. Moreover, the progression when calling became more and more evident in time is also a generally valid way of interpretation of the phenomenon.

A born-to-the-calling philosophy can also have its place in both countries, because for some people it was clear from early years what they would like to do and to be. Some images or metaphors about calling are also corresponding in the language of Ukrainians and Americans. Thus the metaphor of "doors opening and closing to guide a person into a particular role" [Bigham, 2008: 69] can be supported from our interviews by the image of open path to go. There is, however, a difference about the idea of a direct impact from outside on a called person. For the religious believers "implicit in vocation is the presence of a caller. In biblical narratives, the caller has a name Yahweh, God, Jesus. The caller's voice is heard as something outside the person called" [VanOosting, 2002: 11]. Most of the students in the American research would agree with that. Even though they did not have, and had not expected to get, a direct vocal experience of calling, they do believe and say openly that God calls them, for example, to become teachers [Bigham, 2008]. Whereas in a secular educating institutions like we have seen in Ukraine it was true out of 10 only for 1 or 2 students. Nevertheless, the idea of God's rather subtle providence was acceptable for the half of our interviewees. The Orthodox Christian people in Ukraine would say that in a rather humble way. For us, Ukrainians, the

experience of calling is rather personal and internal. That is not what we would talk in public. For teachers and pedagogic students the only real external personification of calling is mainly an image of children's faces, of pupils whom they teach.

Although the experience of calling is akin to responsibility and sacrifice, people in Ukraine do not feel it like a heavy burden. The possible in America and Western Europe opinion that calling is a necessity even when one does not like it would rather not be supported on the base of our research in Ukraine. For example, we can find in the "Theological Dictionary" by Karl Rahner and Herbert Vorgrimler that any career, "even one that is disliked, can be a vocation, since one may have a duty to do what one finds difficult" [Rahner & Vorgrimler, 1965: 483-484]. Contrariwise, calling is rather a personal happiness than a duty for Ukrainians. Hard work for calling can be acceptable, but still it fulfills and brings happiness. Ukrainian students generally insist that freedom is the essence of calling. Moreover, some of them feel easy to say that callings can change during the life, because they are personal.

What is also different is that Ukrainians are very cautious about affirmation that they are chosen for their callings. That could mean the difference of the religion and culture in Ukraine comparing to the USA. Ukrainian believers would accept that God brings them into definite field of activity, gives them some gifts and will give the abilities to overcome the difficulties, but to say that they are chosen ones is too strong statement for the majority of them. Only 1 student of 10 and 1 of 5 teachers told directly that they did not choose their way themselves because the choice was in God's hands.

The experience of calling as a career-motivating factor in Ukraine is rather not religious. It is about self-realization, social service and helping people, about goodness. Ukrainian students and teachers do not use the word "spirituality" when talking about their calling for pedagogic profession. During our interviews, the Ukrainian Christian believers did not tell that they were going to be teachers directly because of the religion. Our survey also showed a very little evidence of impact of the religion on the choice of teaching profession. Only 3% of students admitted that they got a religious calling to teach. At the same time love for children, desire to give knowledge, to benefit the society as motives are really important and it is evident that teaching profession cannot be a calling without them. Teaching as a career definitely needs calling, even though it is not true for some teachers. That is undoubted thesis for Ukrainians and for Americans as well. Maybe in Ukraine we need it even more.

I think that the cross-cultural studies of calling need further development as for the subject fields, methods and procedures and present a big scientific and practical interest. Moreover, the cross-cultural competence is a vital need of a contemporary world [Aleksandrova, 2016: 21]. Thanking the American colleagues from Liberty University for their research and for the impetus of my study, I hope that presented article has also added some knowledge and experience in the field of education and for general understanding of the phenomenon of calling.

Conclusions

Let us make a short summary of our findings. Calling as a phenomenon has a structure that can be presented as follows: *Desire (Passion) — Talent (Abilities) — Realization — Social Benefit and Good*. In case of religious belief, the structure of calling looks like this: *Faith — Gifts — Deeds — Religious or Spiritual Benefit*. There could be no calling when it is a lack or a gap in it. Whatever structures can be invented, we feel that calling goes from

the depth of human being and from the wonder of co-existence with people, or even from the transcendent being of God. Calling is a sacred possession or rather a gift that one is free to take or to lose.

The aim of transpersonal goodness is the core of the phenomenon of calling and gives the integrity of its structure. Calling is for good, it cannot ruin. It is a kind of participation in creation within this world. What is opposite to it is not an evil. It is human laziness and fears that can be overcome with faith, love and wisdom.

Because of free character of the phenomenon, calling cannot be a criterion for a formal assessment of teacher's ability to work at school. That is rather a regulative idea for some more detailed instruments for the improvements and training of teachers and for the politics in education. *Teacher's calling is to bring young people to their own callings.*

If the essence of education is raising people to the level of spirit out of the level of matter, the task of a teacher is to bring up that ability in the youth. That is the core the teacher's mission in the world.

Calling is not all in our life. It has its limits, its horizons of appearance and there is always something else or someone else beyond it. That is why calling needs ethics and, as we can say, first of all calling needs faith. However, the attention to the phenomenon of calling is definitely a part of caring for the future of humanity.



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