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ACADEMIC MOTIVATION IN THE CONTEXT OF MODERN EDUCATION

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Inna Zhuravleva

Moscow Pedagogical State University (MPGU)

E-mail: ia.zhuravleva@mpgu.edu

Tatiana Sakharova

Moscow Pedagogical State University (MPGU),

E-mail: sakharova@mail.ru

Maria Bataeva

Moscow Pedagogical State University (MPGU)

E-mail: md.bataeva@mpgu.edu

Tatiana Guskova

Moscow Pedagogical State University (MPGU),

E-mail: tanyaguscova@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This article concerns the issue of academic motivation in the context of modern higher education. Higher education and employers formulate the requirements for future professionals. A professional society is in need of competent graduates of higher education institutions that determine students' expectations in the learning process and drives the changes in the contents, scope and new hierarchy of academic motives. Understanding the specifics of academic motivation in the context of modern education directly determines the efficiency of the learning process as well the professional formation of human beings and their personal motivation. The research has been performed using the following methods: 1. Methods for research of academic motivation in higher education facilities (T. I. Ilyina); 2. Methods for research of educational activity of the students (as modified by A. A. Rean, V. A. Yakunin); 3. Educational activity motivation: "Levels and types" (I. S. Dombrovskaya). The sample consisted of young adults, male and female, at the age of 17 to 24. The total amount of subjects was 214 people. The research was performed in the following educational groups: Psychology, psychological and pedagogic education, medicine, arts, mathematics, and law which allowed to study of academic motivation in different subject areas. The research revealed that academic motivation in students of various fields of study has both similar

and different tendencies. The academic motivation was different during the first, second, third, and fourth years of education. This article includes an attempt to indicate a vector for the development of higher schools in the context of digital education.

Keywords: *academic motivation, professional formation, young adults, context, modern education, vectors for development, subject area, development period of a person.*

INTRODUCTION

The education of competent professionals is taking on greater and greater significance. Modern society sets high requirements for graduates of higher education facilities. For example, there is a tendency for society needs professionals who would always be ready for a breakthrough or sudden changes. For young professionals, the formation process is determined by the motivational sphere of personality.

Concerning such a stage of life as student days, it shall be noted that it coincided with the development period of a person becoming an adult and aiming at perfection. With coming of age, professional self-identification becomes more important. At this stage of life, a person chooses a certain baseline for his or her future development. And the first step in choosing the baseline is admission to a higher education facility. Being among peer students, the social significance of the chosen profession, the versatility of its application, the association of the profession with the student's interests and talents, and its creative potential may be the principal reasons for admission to a higher education facility in the very beginning and change by the end of the learning process.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The term "motivation" comes from the Latin "motivato", which means a system of internal factors causing and directing the behaviour of a goal-oriented human or animal (Frolova, 2001, p. 344). For a better understanding of the term "motivation", we shall see it as a trigger causing activity of an organism and determining the focus of such activity (Petrovskiy & Yaroshevskiy, 1990, p. 219). Thus, motivation is a process of satisfaction with an immediate necessity.

The hierarchal structure of the motivation sphere suggests the assimilation of certain moral values as dominating motives for behaviour (Bozhovich, 1995, p. 159). Thinking of the formation of the students' motivational sphere as a complex of socially recognised and established values in their ideal forms, we can talk about the development of motives for learning, primarily educational. L. S. Vygotsky wrote that it was more

important to not just teach a child but to nurture an ability to use and apply knowledge (Vygotsky, 1984, p. 266).

People of modern society are focused on education and want to obtain professionally significant competencies and technologies. This focus is being forced on the growing generation of young adults. We agree with V. S. Mukhina that a human being exists in two capacities, as a social unit and as a unique personality (Mukhina, 2019, p. 54), and believe that humans get academic motivation at young adult age and individualize it. Education of young adults is determined by the individual motive for learning to become a professional and by the social motive for learning, according to which it is important to study to be useful.

Recent studies by T. N. Sakharova on the life purpose orientations of students (Sakharova & Vakhnina, 2018, p. 140- 147) vividly show that inclusion into professional activity determines not only the choice of a profession but also the life purpose orientations of a person for the whole further period of ontogenesis.

An idea by L. S. Vygotsky is important for our study said that the choice of a profession is not only a choice of professional activity but also a choice of a life road and search for one's own place in society (Ilyin, 2011, p. 434). This idea illustrates the main idea for this age—self-identification. It is at the young adult age that a person chooses his/her reference points and becomes responsible for the chosen way. This is confirmed by the studies of M. D. Bataeva on personality development in young adult age (Bataeva, 2015, p. 70 - 74).

Following our native psychologists, we will determine motivation as means to explain the goal orientation of action and as organisation and steadiness of an integral activity aimed at the achievement of a certain goal. And by academic motivation, we will understand organised and steady activity aimed at satisfying cognitive needs and acquiring professional competencies.

Concerning the phenomenon of academic motivation, foreign authors come to think of personal motivation as a decisive factor in the efficiency of the learning process (Vanslambrouck & Zhu & Lombaerts & Philipsen & Tondeur, 2018, p. 34). Research on academic motivation is important for the improvement of many aspects of the learning process and professional formation (Lazareva, 2016, p. 46-48). Academic motivation describes psychological processes that direct students and stimulate them to study to perform a certain task (Karlen, 2019, p. 2). Scientific works distinguish internal and external academic motivation.

Speaking of the contents of motivational orientations common for a young adult, it should be said that the following orientations are distinguished in the learning process: Process, evaluation, result, and avoidance of trouble. Learning activity of the students may have the following specifics: Peculiarity of objectives and results (training for independent work, getting skills, knowledge, capabilities, development of personally and professionally important qualities); the certain character of the object of study (scientific knowledge, information on further work, etc.); scheduled conditions the students are learning in; and specific means of activity.

We made a suggestion that students' academic motivation will be different in different fields of study. Motivation for learning activities changes from the first to the last years of education. Understanding overall trends and the unique formation of students' academic motivation will allow us to determine new vectors for the development of higher education.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Research of the phenomenon of academic motivation at admission to a higher education facility and its further dynamics allows one to form and develop abilities for professional activity through the realisation of a differentiated approach to various types of academic motivation. Dynamic analysis of academic motivation can help to rethink and rebuild the learning process in the higher education system in a new way. It is necessary to highlight that priority for the solution of the academic motivation problem directly determines the efficiency of the learning process and the professional formation of a person and his/her personal motivation.

At the young adult age, a person makes an important choice in a professional area. Professional self-identification may take place with the first practical skills of work activity and in the choice of the knowledge area and the skills that young adults want to master. By making this choice, they enter the world of the profession they are interested in, the world of knowledge in this profession. A key point in our study is the specifics of academic motivation in students of various fields of study at the young adult age in the situation of skills acquirement in higher education. The situation of contradiction described by A. A. Verbitskiy (Verbitskiy, 2018, p. 11) is also critical when there is simultaneously a developing culture and dominating traditional means of transfer to students in the modern educational space.

The new approach to this subject will allow the definition of new vectors for the development of digital education and highlight the most actual and lacking contents of the higher education system.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the specifics of the academic motivation of young adults in the context of modern education?
2. How does the hierarchy of academic motives change at the young adult age from the first year of education till the fourth one?
3. What are the specifics of students' academic motivation in various fields of study?

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The necessity of diagnostics and quality analysis of this phenomenon in the conditions of digital education in the higher education system determines the new approach to the problem of academic motivation in modern education. The objective of the study is to research the specifics of the academic motivation of students of higher education facilities in various fields of study in the first, second, third, and fourth years. This objective has allowed us to determine the dominating academic motives in modern education and reveal similar and different motives for learning activities in different fields of study.

RESEARCH METHODS

The research was performed using a set of psychodiagnostic methods: Methods for research of academic motivation in higher education facilities (Ilyin, 2011, p. 433) in order to determine the adequacy of the choice of profession and satisfaction with the choice; methods for research of academic motivation for learning activity of the students (modified by A. A. Rean, B. A. Yakunin) (Ilyin, 2011, p. 433) in order to reveal tendencies for the choice of a learning motive; method "Educational activity motivation: Levels and types" (I. S. Dombrovskaya) (Fedina, 2019, p. 67) in order to evaluate the level and type of learning activity. The sample included students of two age groups: 122 students aged 17 to 20 (29 men, 93 women) and 92 students aged 21 to 24 (28 men, 64 women). A total of 214 people participated in the study, of whom 57 were young adult men and 157 were young adult women. The subjects were divided into six groups depending on the field of study. Statistical methods of empirical data treatment were used: 1. Fitting criterion of distribution χ^2 ; 2. Spearman rank correlation coefficient (r_s) (Nasledov, 2012, p. 392).

RESULTS

The research was performed in the following educational groups: Psychology, psychological and pedagogic education, medicine, arts, mathematics, and law.

Among young adult men and women in the psychological group, a tendency to the prevalence of motivation connected with knowledge acquirement and professional skills acquisition has been noted. At graduation, a tendency to decrease motivation connected with knowledge acquirement, acquisition of professional skills and graduation has been noted. Moreover, we have revealed a tendency to have a similar degree of expression of the motive connected with graduation from the first to the last years of studies. The specifics in this area were dynamics from the motive "provision of success of the future professional activity" to the motive "acquisition of deep and profound knowledge". The revealed tendency illustrates the preservation of significance of the motive "graduation" as a study result, but compared to the first year of studies, the graduates have the motive "significance of profound knowledge" prevailing over the wish to provide their success in the future.

In the psychological and pedagogic group, dynamics from the prevalence of graduation motive to the motive connected with profession acquirement were revealed. Such a tendency can be initially conditioned by an external determination of the choice of this field (by parents) and later by the mastering of the profession as a form of further realisation as a professional becomes important for a student. Students in this field are aimed at the acquisition of profound knowledge. A specific trait of motivation in this field is a prevalence of motivation connected with acquiring profound and deep knowledge. Such motivation increases towards the end of education. At the moment of graduation, the importance of graduation decreases and the motive to successfully continue the education increases.

For students learning medicine, a prevalence of motivation connected with the practical acquirement of the profession is noted at the beginning of the studies. Such a tendency may be connected with the specifics of this field of study. At admission, a student is more oriented towards practical activity in medicine than to learning theoretical basics. The specific trait is that motivation "to acquire knowledge" increases towards the last year of education. In the education process, the student understands the importance of a theoretical base in their field of study. Compared to first-year students, graduates have a priority for the learning side of education and not for preserving the status of education. Such a tendency can be caused by the presence of practical experience,

which could have influenced the change of attitude towards the theoretical basics of the area.

A tendency of equal representation of all the academic motives (knowledge acquirement, profession acquisition, graduation) in the first and the last years of education was revealed in the arts sphere. The specific trait is the decrease in study motivation at the moment of graduation. This tendency can be caused by the decrease in the necessity of a detailed study of the theory and the increase in the necessity of its practical use. The tendency shows the importance of this combination of motives during the entire time of education; only the expression of these motives changes from course to course. Moreover, we have revealed such specifics as the importance of the motive to become a highly qualified specialist for students just starting to learn a profession and the decrease of the significance of this motive towards the end of education.

As far as mathematics is concerned, we can indicate an expressed hierarchy of the motives, which changes from the first to the last years of education. The motive "knowledge acquirement" dominates at the beginning of the study, while motives "profession acquisition" and "graduation" become similarly significant in the last year. Such dynamics and a combination of motives can be explained by the fact that when a young adult is entering a higher education facility, he or she is driven by curiosity which later becomes an interest in self-development as a professional. Moreover, we have revealed a tendency for the choice of academic motivation "to avoid judgement and punishment for bad performance". Such a tendency may be connected with the decrease in the importance of external evaluation for the students. Thus, in this field of study, the significance of "superficial motivation" connected with the wish to avoid failure and complete the education in the chosen field increases in the last years of education.

The hierarchy of motives in the legal field is characterized by the motive of graduation with its consistent significance and prevalence. Such a tendency can be caused by the fact that students studying in this field are more oriented towards the end results of the education, i. e. graduation, than to the learning process. By the time of graduation, young men and women chose such academic motives as intellectual satisfaction and success in future professional activity. This tendency may be connected with the upcoming realisation of the student as a professional thanks to the acquired theoretical knowledge.

CONCLUSION

As a result of the research, we can emphasize certain similarities of academic motivation in the context of modern higher education:

Prevalence of motives connected with knowledge acquirement, self-education, and a combination of motives connected with the educational side of the study (learning and assimilation of the theory) is a priority for students in all fields and every year of education. Moreover, a tendency to decrease motivation connected with knowledge acquirement was noted towards the end of education and the increase of superficial motivation from entering a higher education facility until graduation, but with the stable prevalence of profound motivation.

A tendency for the choice of five priority academic motives was revealed in modern young adults: To become a highly qualified specialist, to graduate, to get intellectual satisfaction, to achieve success in future professional activity, and to get deep and profound knowledge. According to V. S. Mukhina, this choice may be connected with the social significance of the such combination of motives for a person.

Academic motivation connected with the acquirement, processing and practical application of knowledge is a priority for all young adults. It has been revealed that by graduation, it is not as important for the student to study academic disciplines in more detail as in the first year of education. In the first year of education and at the "equator", a young adult aims at acquiring knowledge and creating a good theoretical base for himself. In the last years of education, the priority shifts towards graduation and self-realisation as a professional based on the acquired knowledge and skills. Thus, the level of social motivation increases because of the aspiration to comply with the requirements of society for being a professional who can perform high-quality work.

The research results also allow us to conclude that we have confirmed an earlier suggestion that students' academic motivation is different in different fields of study and that academic motivation changes from the first to the last year of education.

The fact that the tendency of "being educated" is preserved is a curious one. The research results allow us to think about the urgency of preserving the current vector of education. For students, the preservation of theoretical education in the first years is important, ensuring consistency between various levels of education and promoting more comfortable adaptation for first-year students. It is important for higher education to develop to increase the practical orientation of the learning process in the last years of education with inclusion in professional activity.

It is clear that higher education is the backbone of academic motivation, and it is necessary to improve the development of personal motivation for the consolidation of acquired competencies and practical skills for students.

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