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SELF-MOTIVATION AS A KEY FACTOR IN THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENTS: RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

LA AUTOMOTIVACIÓN COMO FACTOR CLAVE EN EL DESARROLLO PROFESIONAL DE LOS ESTUDIANTES: LA EXPERIENCIA INVESTIGADORA

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the research was to evaluate the level of self-motivation among students and highlight its significance in fostering an active life stance. The study employs the framework of emotional intelligence to measure self-motivation among students. A modified version of the N. Hall emotional intelligence assessment test, focusing on self-motivation questions, is administered to a sample of 140 first-year students from two universities. The findings reveal that a significant proportion of students exhibit a low level of self-motivation (38.3%), while students with a high level of self-motivation constitute the smallest group (22.5%). A comparative analysis between the two universities indicates notable differences, with the Moscow university showing higher levels of self-motivation among its students. Additionally, the study identifies gender-based differences, with young women demonstrating higher levels of self-motivation compared to young men. This research underscores the importance of nurturing self-motivation among students to facilitate their transition to adulthood successfully. Higher education institutions play

a pivotal role in creating an environment conducive to self-motivation development. These findings emphasize the need for further exploration of self-motivation in the context of educational and personal growth, highlighting it as a promising area for future research and pedagogical intervention.

Keywords:

Self-Motivation, Students, Emotional Intelligence, Higher Education, Personal Development.

RESUMEN

El objetivo de la investigación fue evaluar el nivel de automotivación de los estudiantes y resaltar su importancia en el fomento de una postura de vida activa. El estudio emplea el marco de la inteligencia emocional para medir la automotivación entre los estudiantes. Se administra una versión modificada de la prueba de evaluación de inteligencia emocional de N. Hall, centrada en preguntas de automotivación, a una muestra de 140 estudiantes de primer año de dos universidades. Los resultados revelan

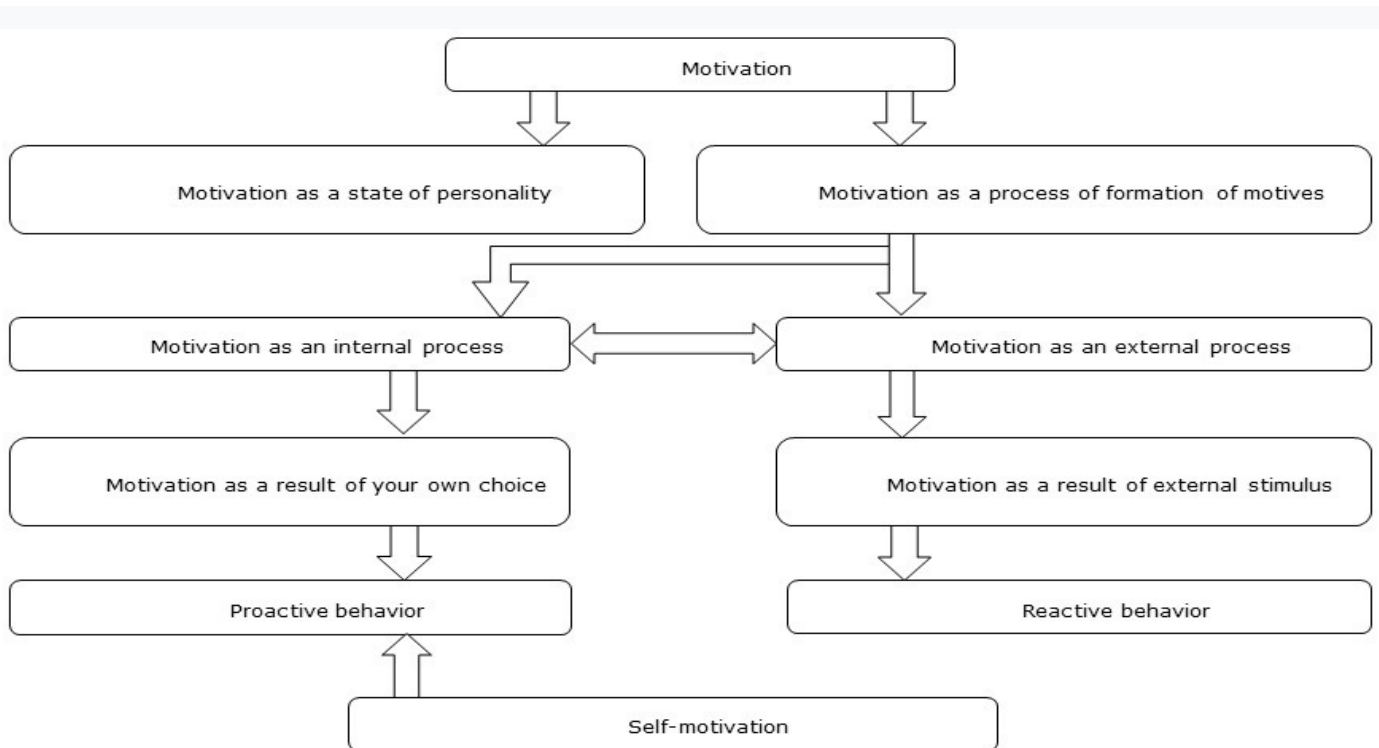
que una proporción significativa de estudiantes exhibe un bajo nivel de automotivación (38,3%), mientras que los estudiantes con un alto nivel de automotivación constituyen el grupo más pequeño (22,5%). Un análisis comparativo entre las dos universidades indica diferencias notables: la universidad de Moscú muestra niveles más altos de automotivación entre sus estudiantes. Además, el estudio identifica diferencias basadas en el género: las mujeres jóvenes demuestran niveles más altos de automotivación en comparación con los hombres jóvenes. Esta investigación subraya la importancia de fomentar la automotivación entre los estudiantes para facilitar su transición exitosa a la edad adulta. Las instituciones de educación superior desempeñan un papel fundamental en la creación de un entorno propicio para el desarrollo de la automotivación. Estos hallazgos enfatizan la necesidad de una mayor exploración de la automotivación en el contexto del crecimiento educativo y personal, destacándola como un área prometedora para futuras investigaciones e intervenciones pedagógicas.

Palabras clave:

Automotivación, Estudiantes, Inteligencia Emocional, Educación Superior, Desarrollo Personal.

INTRODUCTION

Any time a person is active in one form or another, there is a need to resort to using the term “motivation” to explain the reasons for this activity. This term has long and firmly entered the lexicon of a wide variety of sciences studying human behavior, has gained particular popularity and, it would seem, as a result of this, its semantic load should be clearly defined and fixed in science. However, this is not the case. And this has objective reasons. The fact is that this term reflects a very complex and multivariate phenomenon, which is very difficult to express in any one generally accepted formulation. In the figure 1, we tried to reflect the main scientific approaches to determining the essence of motivation and at the same time show its relationship with self-motivation, which is the object of our research.



Source: self-made

There are two main approaches to the interpretation of motivation. The first considers motivation from the standpoint of statics and is associated with its definition as a certain psychological state of the individual, reflecting the degree of interest in the implementation of any actions and the direction of these actions at a specific time and in a specific situation. To characterize this state, a variety of variables are used that characterize the motivational sphere of the individual, such

as needs, goals, interests, etc. (Utkin, 2004; Meshkov & Meshkov, 2015).

Another approach considers motivation as a dynamic process unfolding over time, resulting in the formation of motives. For example, the outstanding Russian psychologist Ilyin (2003), considers motivation from such positions: *“Motivation is the process of forming a motive that goes through certain stages and steps, and a motive is the product of this process, so motivation”* (p. 84). Within the system of this approach, two main directions can be distinguished from the point of view of this process belonging to the inner world of the individual or to external motivating circumstances in relation to it: *“Motivation is the process of motives oneself and others to work to achieve personal goals or goals of the organization”*. (Meskon et al., 2002, p. 360)

Consideration of motivation as an externally organized process in relation to a person is carried out in many sciences: management, pedagogy, marketing, etc. in order to identify the most optimal tools for stimulating labor, educational, purchasing and other behavior. In any case, the behavior of the individual here should be considered as some kind of cumulative reaction to external influences, which can contribute to the development of personality, but is not unconditional. It is another matter if we are talking about the so-called internally organized motivation. As Ilyin (2003), rightly notes: *“The strength of the motive is greater if the motivation is internally organized, so when a person determines his own activity based on internal motives (needs, desires)”* (p. 125). It is clear that there is a certain connection between the processes of internal and externally organized motivation, since a person is not isolated from the external environment and to one degree or another experiences its effects. However, even in the case of externally organized motivation, internal motivation plays a significant role, which the famous German psychologist H. Hekhausen (2003), defines it as follows: *“Obviously, in order for an intention to arise from the goal in question, at least an act of internal consent is required”*. (p. 43)

Thus, internal motivation acts primarily as a result of one's own choice, and therefore a person, if present, is more ready to manifest any activity. Behavior resulting from internal motivation can be called proactive. It seems that the formation of such proactive behavior is what is commonly called self-motivation. The concept of self-motivation in scientific research is used much less often than the original concept of motivation. Meanwhile, in the practical life of a particular individual, it is self-motivation that is of key importance, since it allows a person to maintain vital activity and be active in difficult and critical situations,

even without relying on external motivating reinforcement. It is also important to emphasize that self-motivation is the basis of continuous personal and professional development and self-improvement. It is noteworthy in this regard that in the fundamental work of Ilyin (2003), in the section called *“Motivation of self-improvement”* the author operates with the concepts of self-persuasion, self-suggestion, self-stimulation, etc., which in essence is self-motivation, although he does not use this term.

According to Belkina (2014), defines self-motivation as *“the process of creating and maintaining one's own motives based on a conscious choice of a person and aimed at satisfying his needs”* (p. 42). This definition seems to us not enough complete. Really, self-motivation is directly related to choice, but not every choice, as is known, is realized in actions, therefore, when considering self-motivation, we should talk not only about the motivation of choice, but also about the motivation of action. And this means that the will is the most important component of the process of self-motivation, since the transition from intentions to their realization is not carried out automatically: *“In order for the plan to be realized, a person must resort to volitional efforts. Even the presence of an intention in a person may not lead to the realization of his plans if he cannot show willpower”*. (Slinkova, 2006, p. 159)

Strangely enough, in motivational concepts, the issue of will is not given due attention. And in science itself, opinions on this matter have always been so contradictory that back in the 30s of the XX century, a highly respected psychologist Levin (2001), made a proposal to exclude will from the conceptual apparatus of psychological sciences due to its great uncertainty, and a well-known Russian researcher of the psychology of will Ivannikov (2016), argues that *“this concept is another theoretical construct (hypothesis), and not a designation of a real psychological mechanism”* (p. 62). Another Russian psychologist, Shevtsov (2016), concludes his research *“on the will and its psychology” with the question: “... the result of the last centuries of the existence of the psychology of the will can confidently be considered one tiny question: what is the will?”* (p. 175)

In this study, we did not set the task of defining the will as a psychological phenomenon, although it certainly requires its resolution. Rather, we proceed from the traditional interpretation of this term as a certain ability of a person, regardless of the circumstances of the external environment, to suppress or, on the contrary, to develop certain impulses for a particular activity. Thus, speaking about the will in the context of the problem of self-motivation, we mean the following fundamentally important questions: how and by what means is motivation maintained up to the

successful completion of the activity and various obstacles to this are overcome?

Developed self-motivation underlies the formation of an active life position, while it significantly affects both the level of activity shown by a person and how successful this activity is in terms of achieving personal and professional goals. The development of self-motivation of young people in the process of studying at a university is a current task facing higher school teachers (Slinkova et al., 2017). This is confirmed by the following considerations.

Firstly, the basic principle of educational policy in Russia (Government of the Russian Federation, 2012) is the free development of personality, which is achieved primarily due to high self-motivation.

Secondly, studentship is that time in a person's life when the transition to the "adult" state is finally completed. This transition, like any transition period, is not easy. The understanding that an adult should take responsibility for maintaining and developing their own motivation to study, future professional activity and life in general does not come immediately and is complicated by the peculiarity of Russian culture and mentality, which manifests itself in the excessive care of parents for their children even after they come of age. This often leads to what we call learned helplessness syndrome. Another aspect of the problem of students' self-motivation is pointed out by foreign researchers, noting: *"Leaving a supportive high school environment can be difficult for students who lack self-directed and self-motivated learning skills"*. (Higgins et al., 2021, p. 8)

Our experience of communicating with students shows that they are often unable to put many mental processes under personal control, do not have sufficient will to do so. For example, from conversations with students, we found out that many of them spend up to 10 hours a day on various gadgets, and this despite the fact that they themselves admit that most of this pastime does not bring them any special benefit or even pleasure. We believe that this problem is based on an insufficiently developed self-motivation. The purpose of this study was to assess the level of self-motivation of students.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The psychological literature presents a sufficient number of tools for assessing various aspects of self-motivation: motivation to learn, motivation to communicate, motivation to various activities, etc. In our research, from one side, we used a broader approach, considering self-motivation to life in general, and, on the other hand, we narrowed this approach, focusing on issues of will to any action of conscious choice. The methodological basis of this approach

was the concept of emotional intelligence, which identifies self-motivation as the most important component of emotional intelligence and considers self-motivation in the context of the manifestation of volitional efforts of the individual.

This directly follows from the definition of the very essence of emotional intelligence, which one of the developers of this concept designates as follows: *"such abilities as the ability to develop motivation for oneself and persistently strive to achieve a goal, despite failures, to restrain impulses and postpone getting satisfaction, to control one's moods and not let suffering deprive oneself of the ability to think, empathize and hope"*. (Goleman, 2009, p. 61)

As a methodological basis of the study, we used that part of the N. Hall emotional intelligence assessment test, which contains questions related directly to self-motivation, in the Russian version. This test uses an evaluation school of -3 points (absolute disagreement) up to +3 points (absolute agreement). We have abandoned such differentiation of respondents' answers in favor of a more understandable and familiar 5-point scale for students. When processing the test results, the following interpretation of the numerical values of this scale was used: up to 2.9 points – low, from 3.0 to 4.0 points – average, from 4.1 to 5.0 points – a high level of self-motivation. For testing, the Google Forms service was used, which allows you to get the necessary array of data in Excel format, which simplifies the task of processing test results.

For comparative analysis opportunities, first-year students were tested at two universities: Moscow Psychological and Social University (for students studying in the bachelor's degree courses "Economics" and "Jurisprudence", with a total of 89 people) and Belgorod State National Research University (for students studying in the bachelor's degree courses "Service" and "Tourism", with a total of 51 people). Thus, the total sample was 140 people.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

According to the data presented in Table 1, students with an average level (39.1%) make up the largest proportion of the total sample, and students with a high level of self-motivation (22.5%) make up the smallest. More than a third of students (38.3%) have a low level of self-motivation. The results of testing of Moscow and Belgorod universities differ very significantly, with a clear advantage of the former. I

f in the Moscow university every third student has a high level of self-motivation, then in the Belgorod university the share of such students is only 7.6%. From one side, this may seem quite natural, since the most ambitious young

people with a sufficiently high motivation seek to enroll in the capital's universities. From other side, Belgorod university can hardly be called provincial, it is distinguished by a developed material, technical and scientific base.

Perhaps these results can be explained by the fact that our chosen areas of training at the Belgorod university are considered less prestigious in comparison with the areas of training at the Moscow university. In any case, if the test results of the students of the Moscow university can be considered satisfactory, then the results obtained in Belgorod cannot be called such.

Table 1: Indicators of the level of self-motivation in % of the total number of respondents

Direction of training	Low	Medium	High
Service	45,5	46,0	8,5
Tourism	34,9	58,3	6,8
Total, Belgorod	39,3	53,2	7,6
Lawyers	38,6	26,4	35,0
Economy	36,2	34,6	29,2
Total, Moscow	38, 1	28,8	33,1
In the whole sample	38,4	39,1	22,5

Source: self-made

The next direction of our analysis was to identify differences in students' self-motivation, taking into account gender (Table 2).

Table 2: Gender-specific test results in % of the total number of respondents.

The level of self-motivation	In the whole sample	young women	Young men
Low	38,4	33,9	43,1
Average	39,1	41,5	38,6
Tall	22,5	24,6	18,3

Source: self-made

The highest proportion in the group of young women is occupied by representatives with an average level of self-motivation (41.5%), and the lowest - with a high level (22.5%). Among the young men who took part in the testing, the group with a low level of self-motivation was the most representative (43.1%), and the smallest - with a high level (18.3%). Comparative analysis shows a higher level of self-motivation of young women compared to young men. Perhaps it may not seem quite typical, but our personal experience of direct communication with students is consistent with this picture.

Thus, as our research has shown, the motivation of students needs support and development to solve the problem of forming a comprehensively developed personality. An outstanding Russian researcher, academician of the Russian Academy of Sciences Novikov (2011), formulates this in the form of the following key idea: "The task of higher school pedagogy is to propose a methodology for organizing the educational process that optimally develops the student's "self" and notes that this very complex area "has yet to be mastered".

The university environment can become a powerful factor in maintaining and developing students' self-motivation. Since this article did not aim at a detailed study of the features of such a university environment, we will designate only the most general initial conditions for its formation:

- the return of the academic freedom traditionally inherent in the university environment, liberation from excessive bureaucratization that accompanies almost all pedagogical processes today;
- maximum stimulation of the creative activity of teachers and students for the fullest use of the personal potential of each participant in the educational process;
- formation of individual educational trajectories of students by providing a wide range of elective disciplines and their free choice by students, which, as many experts note, leads to an increase in internal motivation (Gordeeva, 2006; Deci & Ryan, 2008; Fryer et al., 2016).

purposeful work on the development of strong-willed qualities of students, among which it is customary to include perseverance, perseverance, courage, determination, endurance, patience, etc. (Ilyin, 2009; Glazunov & Sidorov, 2016).

CONCLUSIONS

The conducted research confirmed our assumption about the need to maintain and develop students' self-motivation to ensure their full inclusion in adulthood, the formation of an active life position and the maximum use of creative potential. Higher education institutions as flagships of science and education can do a lot for this, creating an environment for nurturing talents, stimulating students to be active in all spheres of life.

The conducted research was aimed at attracting the attention of the pedagogical community to this problem and does not pretend to be its final solution. It seems that this problem represents a fruitful field for future scientific research.

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