

RESEARCH ARTICLE

## **Social Partnership: The Development of Soft Skills In Young People In Regions**

### **Asociación social: el desarrollo de habilidades sociales en los jóvenes de las regiones**

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**Received 09-08-20 Revised 10-10-20**

**Accepted 20-12-21 On line 03-17-21**

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## Resumen

En las condiciones modernas, las asociaciones sociales son una herramienta clave para el desarrollo de las habilidades sociales de los jóvenes, que ahora tienen demanda en el mercado laboral. Las alianzas sociales en la región de Chelyabinsk (Rusia) permiten entablar un diálogo constante, interesado y productivo, así como dar pasos para establecer las relaciones necesarias entre las autoridades, los empleadores y la juventud de la región. Las habilidades blandas permiten a los jóvenes realizar su liderazgo, revelar plenamente su potencial y, por lo tanto, convertirse en profesionales ideales. La automotivación permite realizar actividades profesionales con motivación durante mucho tiempo, en un entorno emocional difícil y sin refuerzo positivo. Las habilidades comunicativas aseguran una interacción libre de conflictos, confianza en uno mismo y un comportamiento estable en la actividad profesional. Las habilidades comunicativas y la automotivación son las principales habilidades blandas de los jóvenes, y la formación de habilidades blandas en condiciones de colaboración social es la tarea más importante del sistema educativo y del estado en general. Según los resultados del estudio empírico, la mayoría de los encuestados tenían un nivel de automotivación bajo y medio. No pudieron realizar actividades profesionales durante mucho tiempo sin motivación externa adicional y tenían pocas habilidades de autocontrol, autorregulación y autorreflexión. A los jóvenes les resultaba difícil entablar relaciones interpersonales con los demás, al hablar en público experimentaban tensión y ansiedad, y les era difícil adaptarse a las diversas condiciones del entorno profesional. Los resultados de la investigación empírica confirman la hipótesis de que los jóvenes deben desarrollar habilidades blandas y la colaboración social es una herramienta clave para ello.

**Palabras clave:** Colaboración social, Habilidades blandas, Educación, Habilidades comunicativas, Autorregulación, Auto-Motivación.

## Summary

In modern conditions, social partnerships are a key tool for the development of young people's soft skills, which now are in demand on the labour market. Social partnerships in the Chelyabinsk region (Russia) allow one to establish a constant, interested, and productive dialogue, as well as make steps to establish the necessary relations between the authorities, employers, and the youth of the region. Soft skills allow young people to realize their leadership, fully reveal their potential, and, therefore, become ideal professionals. Self-motivation allows carrying out professional activities with motivation for a long time, in a difficult emotional environment, and without positive reinforcement. Communicative skills ensure conflict-free interaction, self-confidence, and stable behaviour in professional activity. Communicative skills and self-motivation are the main soft skills of young people, and the formation of soft skills in conditions of social partnership is the most important task of the education system and the state in general. According to the results of the empirical study, the majority of the respondents had a low and Average level of self-motivation. They were not able to perform professional activities for a long time without additional external motivation and had poor abilities of self-control, self-regulation, and self-reflection. Young people found it difficult to build interpersonal relations with others, during public speaking they experienced tension and anxiety, and it was difficult for them to adapt to various conditions of the professional environment. The results of empirical research confirm the hypothesis that young people must develop soft skills, and social partnership is a key tool for this.

**Keywords:** Social Partnership, Soft Skills, Education, Communicative Skills, Self-Regulation, Self-Motivation.

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## Introduction

Today, social partnership is extremely important in solving a range of social problems, organizing stable long-term interaction between education and business, and developing young people's soft skills for the further realization of their potential and improvement of the quality of life in general. Social partnership is based on the state's desire to use the innovation and energy potential of the younger generation for state modernization (Kozyreva, Khoronko, 2018). Social partnership helps to minimize the reduction of the role of the public and civil society institutions in the social development of young people. At the same time, various forms of social partnership become the key tools for the development of young people's soft skills, which now are in demand on the labour market (Tsvetkova, Smirnov, 2020; Groshev, Laptev, 2019). In modern conditions, scientists from various fields, employers, and public figures agree that soft skills are necessary for young people to be able to effectively implement professional activities in various fields, especially in the field of human relations.

Social partnership in the Chelyabinsk region (Russia) is built on the regional public authorities and local governments' assistance for the democratic strengthening and development of social partnership (Kuznetsov, Novikov, 2011). Social partnership in the Chelyabinsk region makes it possible to establish a constant, interested, and productive dialogue and make steps to establish the necessary relations between the authorities, employers, and the youth of the region. Social partnership makes it possible to balance the interests of the authorities, employers, and young people while achieving a common goal, which is to develop soft skills of the latter and distribute available resources and capacities most effectively. One of the most relevant forms of social partnership in the Chelyabinsk region is the creation of socially significant innovative projects by the educational organizations of various levels, enterprises, and organizations.

Social partnership at the present stage of regional development is the main reference point for the formation of regional youth policy. It is aimed at eliminating contradictions between the quickly changing demand for specialists in the regional labour market and educational organizations' supply. The developing economy of the Chelyabinsk region is a competitive environment that rejects unskilled labour and creates psychological stress and imbalance in the labour market. All this makes the problem of soft skill development in the region more urgent.

Social partnership helps to minimize the reduction of the role of the public and civil society institutions in the social development of young people. The organization of social partnership, in our opinion, will allow all the participants to adapt to modern market conditions, which presuppose the constant improvement of technologies. The development of soft skills among students will also help to become more responsive to the requirements of the labour market and to correspond to the economic and social situation in the region. Social partnership is considered to be a type of interaction between educational organizations, the labour market and local government for the coordination and implementation of common interests (Andrienko, Tolkanyuk, 2019).

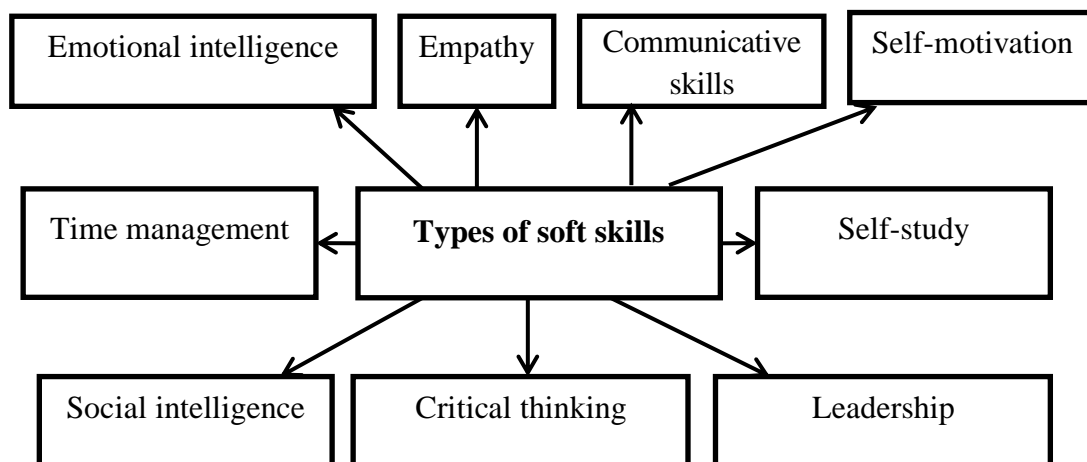
The youth-led entrepreneurial environment, as one of the forms of social partnership, is considered to be another opportunity for students to develop professional, social, and personal competencies that affect the self-determination of students and their motivational readiness for professional activity (German, Dalibozhko, 2018). For universities, the identification of the range of social partners and the ways of cooperation with them can be considered an additional source for the development and management of the educational and social potential (Syrykh, Fedorova, 2017). According to T.V. Syrykh and S.G. Fedorova, "social partnership positively influences the following areas of cooperation: the development of human resources, civic consciousness, pre-professional and professional education" (Syrykh, Fedorova, 2017, p. 94). In the world educational practice, one of the defining features of democratic education is the readiness of educational organizations for social partnership, which focuses on society. Social

interaction allows educational organizations to consider the real needs of society and to fulfil the educational function to the full extent (Shulga, 2019). Social partnership allows developing the intellectual, property, and financial potential of educational organizations by attracting non-budgetary sources of funding, increasing competitiveness, and meeting the demands of the labour market (Petrovskii, Aleshugina, Vaganova, 2019).

Social partnership is the co-operation of several organizations, including the exchange, unification, and co-use of economic, material, technical, and human resources, aimed at achieving a common goal, which is to develop soft skills in young people. Social partnership is aimed at structuring several organizations' resources, which allows them to exchange, combine, or share them if necessary. It also involves partnership and cooperation between all the participants of an interaction. Social partnership involves the interaction of organizations, but at the same time preserves their uniqueness. Social partnership in the field of youth policy makes it possible to create educational models with innovative content aimed at the development of young people's soft skills.

Thus, under **social partnership**, we understand the co-operation of several organizations, including the *exchange, unification, and co-use of economic, material, technical, and human resources, aimed at achieving a common goal, which is to develop soft skills in young people*. Social partnership is aimed at structuring the several organizations' resources, which allows them to exchange, combine, or share them if necessary. It also involves partnership and cooperation between all the participants of an interaction.

Social partnership involves the interaction of organizations, but at the same time preserves their uniqueness. Western scientists began to develop the system of soft skills at the beginning of the 21st century. Over the past decades, various programs have appeared dedicated to their development. Soft skills are included in educational standards and curricula of educational organizations of various levels. Foreign researchers pay considerable attention to the problem of soft skill development. According to some researchers, soft skills include ethics, communicative skills, independence, self-motivation, energy, and ability to cooperate (Schulz, 2018; Hurrell, 2016; Ngang Tang, Kaen, 2018). S.A. Hurrell believes that soft skills are not just individual characteristics and inclinations, but also "include interpersonal and intrapersonal abilities that facilitate certain aspects of the professional activity of young people" (Hurrell, 2016, p. 67). The analysis of Russian and foreign studies (Hurrell, 2016; Ngang Tang, Kaen, 2018; Tsalikova, Pakhotina, 2019; Nagimova, Fakhretdinova, 2019) makes it possible to identify the main types of soft skills (Figure 1).



**Figure (1):** The main types of soft skills that are important for the modern young people

Soft skills are important for modern young people for the following reasons:

1. they are necessary for professional competence since they ensure the effectiveness of the implementation of professional activities;

2. they allow implementing professional activities in any professional situation and when interacting with any kind of people;

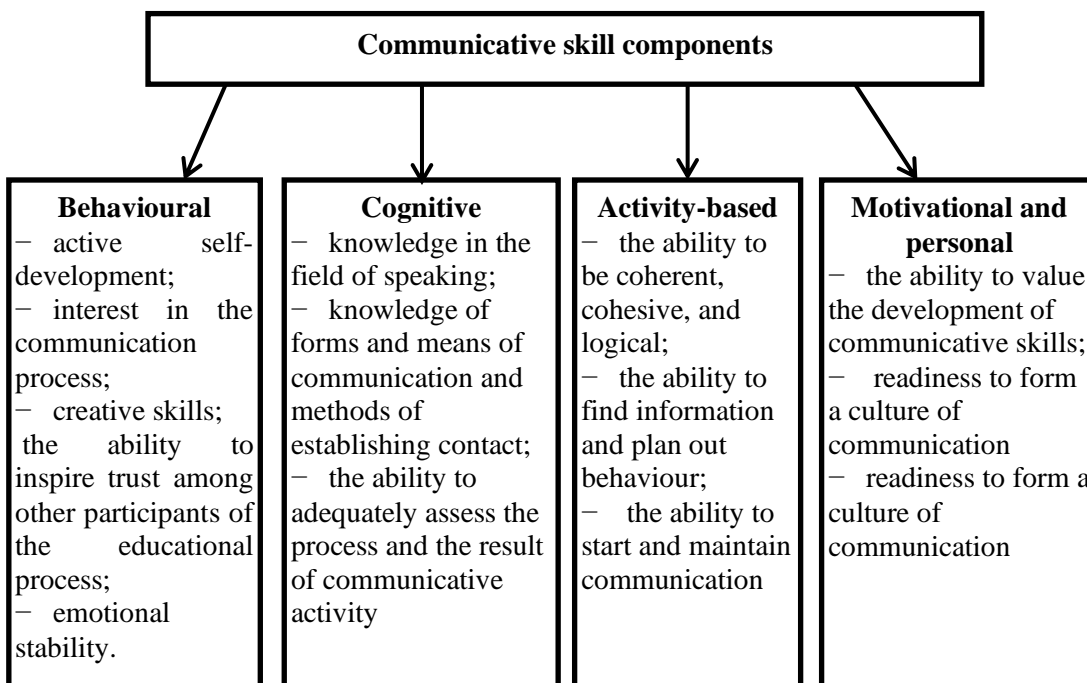
3. in conditions of general uncertainty and variability, young people with soft skills are professionals in demand, since it is much easier for them to adapt to the changing social conditions;

4. soft skills allow young people to realize their leadership, fully reveal their potential, and, therefore, become ideal professionals.

During this study, we examined such soft skills as communicative skills and self-motivation, since in modern conditions of uncertainty, they come to the fore.

*Communicative skills.* These skills involve several sub-skills: “the ability to make a conversation, discuss, and debate; to vary intonation, speech; to make a report freely; the ability to establish contact with different people; the ability to self-control in a situation of pedagogical communication” (Chukhacheva, 2019, p. 357). Communicative skills are closely connected with flexibility in behaviour and communication, the system of skills and abilities in the field of interpersonal interaction, the ability to actively listen and understand, and empathy (Luchsheva, 2018).

Communicative skills ensure conflict-free interaction, self-confidence, stable behaviour in professional activity, and quick adaptation to changing environmental conditions. The key components of communication skills that are important for the professional activity of young people are indicated in Figure 2.



**Figure (2):** Communicative skill components

The studies on *self-motivation* as a phenomenon appeared relatively recently. Self-motivation is considered to be one of the ways to improve the quality of professional activity (Vorobeva, Makarova, 2018). Self-motivation provides an opportunity for self-expression, meets the needs for creativity and self-realization, and ensures a high level of satisfaction with

the results of professional activity. Self-motivation allows carrying out professional activities with motivation for a long time, in a difficult emotional environment, and without positive reinforcement (Shutenko, Shutenko, 2015).

Self-motivation leads to the formation of self-control and self-regulation. It allows young people to self-express and self-actualize in professional activity, solve problems successfully, keep and maintain a high level of professional activity, and think unconventionally and positively.

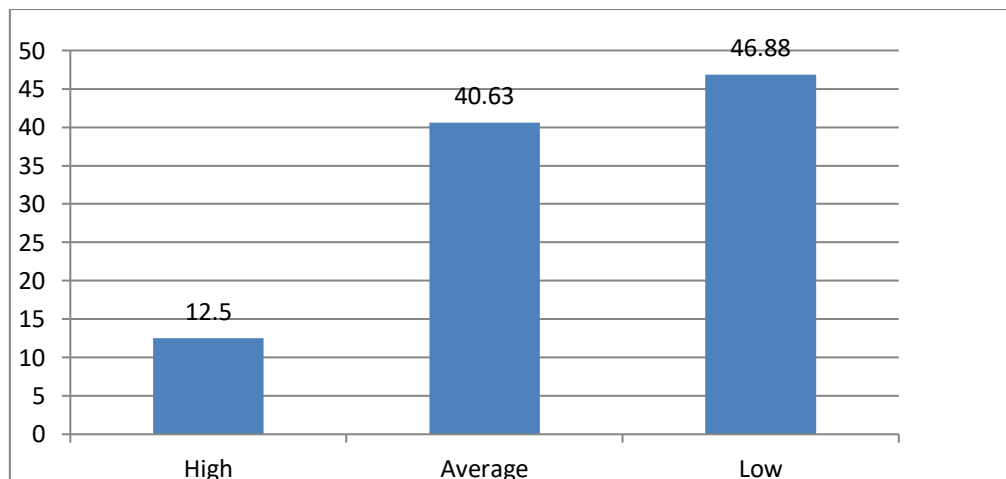
Thus, communicative skills and self-motivation are the main soft skills of young people, and the formation of soft skills in conditions of social partnership is the most important task of the education system and the state in general.

## Methods

The article presents a theoretical analysis of the problem of the development of soft skills in young people in the context of social interaction. Detailed descriptions of communicative skills and self-motivation are presented as the main soft skills of young people. The methodological framework of the research was based on the system and activity-based approach by V.P. Bepalko and D.B. Elkonin; structural approach to the study of personality; diagnostic techniques, analysis and generalization of scientific and theoretical sources. The study involved 149 respondents, universities and professional education organizations' representatives. To assess the level of self-motivation, we chose the test "Change in the level of self-motivation" by S.N. Panchenko (Fadina, Zaikina, 2017). We identified the formation level of communicative skills using the method of assessing the communicative abilities by L.M. Mitina (2004).

## Results

Diagnostic results of the test "Change in the level of self-motivation" by S.N. Panchenko are presented in Figure 3.



**Figure (3):** The young people's formation levels of self-motivation

According to the results of the diagnostic study, the majority of the respondents had a low and average level of self-motivation. Their peak of activity was followed by apathy and dissatisfaction, and for successful activity, they needed constant external motivation.

For the assessment of the communicative skills, we applied the "Assessment methods for the communicative skills" by L.M. Mitina. The method is designed to identify the development level of the respondents' communicative skills, based on the characteristics of their verbal and non-verbal behaviour. The results are presented in Table 1.

**Table (1):** The development level of the communicative skills in young people of the region

Number of respondents	Development levels of the future teachers' communicative skills (respondents/%)					
	Low	Below average	Average	Above average	High	Highest
149	18	29	41	26	20	15
%	12,08	19,46	27,52	18,05	13,42	10,67

The analysis of Table 1 allows drawing the following conclusions: a) 12.08% of the respondents had a low development level of communicative skills; they are characterized by problems in almost all aspects of communication (speech, expressiveness, emotiveness, etc.); b) 46.98% of the respondents had an average and below-average level; they are characterized by mistakes in speech and expressiveness, not always correct pauses, etc.; c) a quarter of the respondents had a high and above-average level; they speak properly and convincingly, show empathy through intonations, use a wide range of gestures and postures, etc. Thus, within the empirical research, only 25% of the respondents had a high development level of communicative skills, while the rest had an average or below-average level.

## Discussion

The results of empirical research make it possible to conclude that young people in the region predominantly had low and average levels of self-motivation development. Half of the respondents had slightly better communicative skills and average and below-average levels. Thus, we found that the formation level of soft skills in young people in the region was at low and average levels. This fact indicates a decrease in their competitiveness in the labour market. In our opinion, social partnership, in all its manifestations, is the leading tool for developing soft skills in the young people in the region, which in modern conditions are in demand on the labour market.

## Conclusion

The following conclusions can be drawn from the study: 1) social partnership allows using the innovation and energy potential of the younger generation for state modernization; 2) social partnerships are a key tool for the development of young people's soft skills, which now are in demand on the labour market; 3) the most relevant forms of social partnership in the Chelyabinsk region are the creation of socially significant innovative projects by educational organizations of various levels, enterprises, and organizations; 4) in conditions of general uncertainty and variability, young people with soft skills are professionals in demand, since it is much easier for them to adapt to the changing social conditions; 5) during this study, we examined such soft skills as communicative skills and self-motivation; self-motivation allows carrying out professional activities with motivation for a long time, in a difficult emotional environment, and without positive reinforcement; communicative skills ensure conflict-free interaction, self-confidence, and stable behaviour in professional activity; 6) according to the results of the diagnostic study, the majority of the respondents had a low and average level of self-motivation; 7) only 25% of the respondents had a high level of communicative skills, while the rest had an average or below average level; 8) the results of empirical research confirm the hypothesis that it is necessary for the young people to develop soft skills, and social partnership is a key tool for this.

## Acknowledgments

This work was financially supported by the Russian Foundation for Basic Research (RFBR) within the science project No. 21-18-00139.

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