

Training as a Means of Developing Students' Motivation

La formación como medio para desarrollar la motivación de los estudiantes

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Summary

The article explores the problems of students' motivation and its influence on educational effectiveness, considering the importance of motivation for young people's personal and professional development. The significance and functions of motivation in various aspects of students' activity were studied (including social conditions of their life). The leading educational motives of people entering a professional educational institution are "professional" ones, but the role of motives changes within the period of study. This process is considerably influenced by vocational guidance work, the organization of industrial practice, along with the possibility of further employment. The research purpose is to study the specifics of developing students' educational motivation at theoretical and empirical levels. The research methodology and its algorithm include conducting a complex psychological and pedagogical experiment by assessing the participants' motivation before and after the implementation of the training programme. Today, it is not sufficient to provide a student with certain knowledge. Much attention is paid to forming his/her professional readiness, which we consider as a personal quality and an essential prerequisite for effective postgraduate activity. Students' professional readiness will help them to successfully fulfill their duties, use knowledge and experience, maintain self-control, be effective when solving production tasks and adapt to continuously evolving conditions of work. Students' professional readiness includes the motivational component, which is expressed in the system of stable attitudes and motives. The effectiveness of developing students' educational motivation is due to a number of pedagogical conditions, primarily the use of training as a method of increasing students' motivation.

KeyWords: motivation, professional readiness, motivational component, effective professional activity.

Resumen

El artículo explora los problemas de la motivación de los estudiantes y su influencia en la eficacia educativa, considerando la importancia de la motivación para el desarrollo personal y profesional de los jóvenes. Se estudiaron la importancia y las funciones de la motivación en varios aspectos de la actividad de los estudiantes (incluidas las condiciones sociales de su vida). Los principales motivos educativos de las personas que ingresan a una institución educativa profesional son los "profesionales", pero el papel de los motivos cambia dentro del período de estudio. Este proceso está considerablemente influenciado por el trabajo de orientación profesional, la organización de la práctica industrial, junto con la posibilidad de un mayor empleo. El propósito de la investigación es estudiar los aspectos específicos del desarrollo de la motivación educativa de los estudiantes a nivel teórico y empírico. La metodología de investigación y su algoritmo incluyen la realización de un experimento psicológico y pedagógico complejo mediante la evaluación de la motivación de los participantes antes y después de la implementación del programa de capacitación. Hoy en día, no es suficiente proporcionar al estudiante ciertos conocimientos. Se presta mucha atención a la formación de su preparación profesional, que consideramos como una cualidad personal y un requisito previo esencial para una actividad de posgrado eficaz. La preparación profesional de los estudiantes les ayudará a cumplir con éxito sus deberes, utilizar los conocimientos y la experiencia, mantener el autocontrol, ser eficaces en la resolución de tareas de producción y adaptarse a las condiciones de trabajo en continua evolución. La preparación profesional de los estudiantes incluye el componente motivacional, que se expresa en el sistema de actitudes y motivos estables. La eficacia de desarrollar la motivación educativa de los estudiantes se debe a una serie de condiciones pedagógicas, principalmente el uso de la formación como método para aumentar la motivación de los estudiantes

Palabras clave: motivación, preparación profesional, componente motivacional, actividad profesional efectiva.

Introducción

Motivation of activity and behaviour is one of the most significant and complex phenomena of the human's mental world. This explains the intense research interest (Leontyev, 2011; Aylamazyan, 1990; Bírová et al., 2018; Volkova & Panchenko, 2018; Blinova, Dugina & Zabolotskikh, 2018; Tekucheva & Gromova, 2016; Ksenzova, 2005) to the problem of motives, the structure of motivation and motivational readiness for a particular activity.

The problem of behavioral and activity motives is a key issue in pedagogy and psychology. According to S. L. Rubinshteyn, motives constitute the core of the personality (Rubinshteyn, 2002).

It is possible to say the same about motivation problems and a person's motivational readiness for a particular activity, along with the importance of determining the conditions and ways of forming such readiness (Penkrat, 1986; Hyelle & Ziegler, 2008).

This is the reason why domestic and foreign psychologists devote so many articles, theses and monographs to motivation issues (Heckhausen, 2003; Hall & Lindsey, 1999; Gorev et al., 2018; Sharonova, Trubnikova & Sokolova, 2018; Badoyev, 1998; Nuttin, 1975).

Studying is one of the internal conditions of human socialization, and the educational activity is the context in which it is performed. The specificity of education consists in combining students' educational activity with other types of activity. A. A. Verbitskiy and N. A. Bakshayeva identified the basic and intermediate forms of this process (Bakshayeva & Verbitskiy, 2019).

The basic forms are:

1. Proper educational activity (lectures and seminars).
2. Quasi-professional activity, which may be presented as a business game or in other game forms.
3. Educational and professional activity (research, work practice, thesis preparation).

One of the features of studying is its complexity, the need for discipline and goal setting to achieve results, which actualizes the problem of motivation. A future specialist's educational motives are complemented and closely intertwined with professional ones. Therefore, it is worth considering motivation for learning and professional development.

It is also important to note that a characteristic feature of personal and moral development is an increase in conscious behavioural motives. The most significant new formations of the student age are self-education development and the conscious orientation towards constructing one's own life, which also dictates the need to develop the motivational sphere of students' personalities.

Literature review

The motivation problem is among the fundamental ones in both domestic and foreign psychology and pedagogy. The variety of approaches to understanding the essence of motivation, its nature, structure and the methods of studying this phenomenon is largely due to the problem's complexity and multidimensionality.

The term "motivation" was first used by A. Schopenhauer (Ilyin, 2003). He considered motivation as "visible from the inside", because when a person intends to do something, he/she always feels the motives as his/her inner will, which is expressed in visible body movements or

actions. Within decades this term was successfully used in psychology and pedagogy to explain the reasons underlying the behaviour of animals and humans (Merlin, 1971). At the present time, the concept of motivation as a mental phenomenon is interpreted in different ways. K. Madsen and J. Godefroy regard motivation as a combination of various factors that guide and support, i.e. determine behavior. According to K. K. Platonov, motivation is a parameter that determines a person's activity in certain areas (Yakobson, 1969).

According to J. Nastas, motivation as a mental phenomenon is a complex structural formation, which includes types of motives and performs certain functions (Bakshayeva & Verbitskiy, 2019). Besides, most researchers agree that motivation is not a static feature, but a dynamic one – changing and developing in the process of life.

Western psychology enriched the international practice with a detailed theory of motivation for achieving success in various activities. The founders of this theory are the American scientists D. McClelland and J. Atkinson and the German researcher H. Heckhausen (Maslow, 1999).

Motives for achieving success (F. Hoppe, D. McClelland) and avoiding failure are so important that they become personality traits.

J. Atkinson amended D. McClelland's views by demonstrating that the need for success should be considered along with another basic need – to avoid failure. People with strong achievement motivation commonly have the desire to succeed, while those with low achievement motivation are characterized by the desire to avoid failure. This provision underlies the theory of subjective risk preferences. It was shown that the combination of these two needs (to achieve success and to avoid failure) determines the level of behavioural risks, which is subjectively acceptable for the individual, along with the modes of behaviour in difficult or dangerous situations.

The pedagogical conditions that contribute to the educational motivation development involve assessing knowledge within the score-saving system, testing the acquired competencies in the process of solving professional tasks, helping students to understand the meaning of their education, rewarding them for participation in competitions, forums, roundtable discussions, scientific and practical conferences, etc. (Abulkhanova-Slavskaya, 1980; Vasbieva et al., 2018; Dolzhich & Dmitrichenkova, 2018; Ksenzova & Sizova, 2003).

Proposed methodology

Students' motivation was examined in the Institute of Foreign Languages of Peoples' Friendship University of Russia (RUDN University).

To research the students' educational motivation, we used "The methodology for the assessment of students' educational motivation" (proposed by A. A. Rean and V. A. Yakunin, modified by N. Ts. Badmayeva), along with the method that reveals the key motives for choosing a profession (proposed by E. M. Pavlyutenkov) (Sidorenko, 2005).

The experimental study involved a number of tasks aimed at the assessment and qualitative analysis of the obtained results. The certain actions were performed in both groups – the experimental one and the control one (see Table 1).

Table 1.

Algorithm of actions within the experiment

Algorithm of actions
1) assessment of students' motivation

2) development and realization of the training programme
3) repeated assessment of students' motivation

Result analysis

Let us consider the results of the training programme implementation by reflecting the results of the control stage. The programme was based on such works as “Fundamentals of group training technology” (I. V. Vachkova), “Group psychological training with high school students and university students” (A. G. Lidars) and “Psychological correction of semantic regulation of a deviant person’s life path” (K. V. Karpinsky) (Sidorenko, 2005).

The classes were held once a week for two months. At the beginning of each lesson, the teacher and the students discussed the key moments of the previous class. Then there was a small lecture, followed by exercises and games aimed at consolidating the studied material. At the end of the lesson, each participant could speak out, highlighting its advantages and disadvantages, along with expressing his/her wishes for further work in the group.

After the implementation of the motivation development programme we conducted the repeated assessment of the students representing the Department of Social Pedagogy within the experimental group.

Figure 1 shows the average group indicators of studying educational motivation in the experimental group at the control stage.

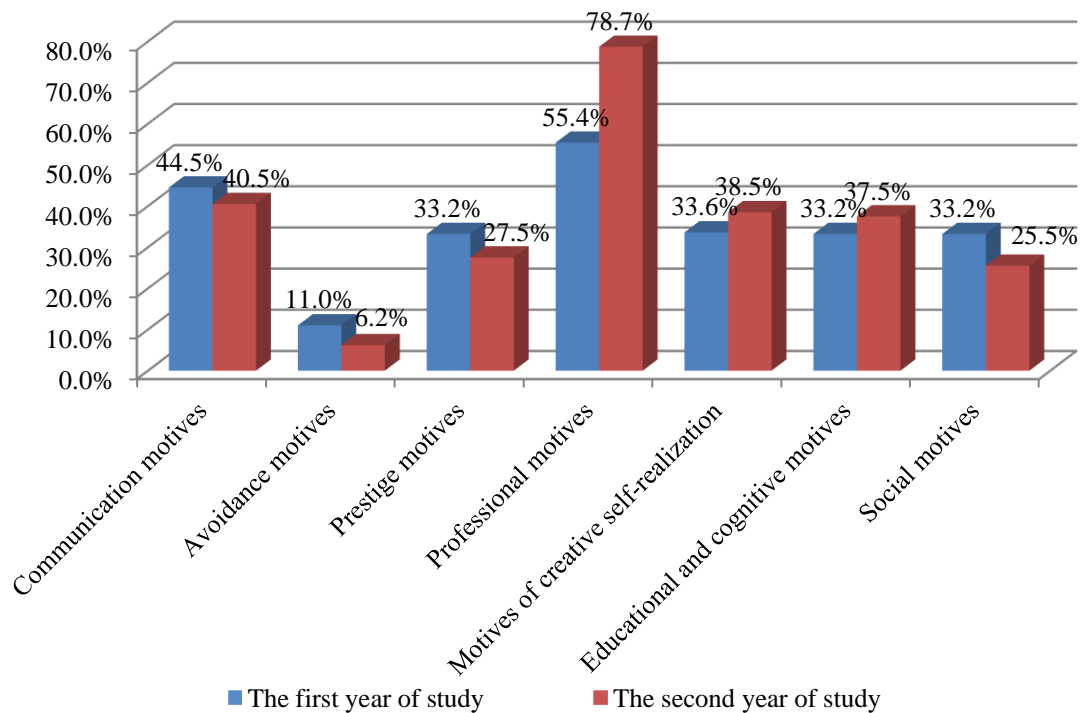


Figure 1. Results of studying educational motivation in the experimental group

The obtained data demonstrate a shift in values, which is the most significant for such indicators as avoidance motives (decreased by 3.1 points), professional motives (increased by 3 points) and social motives (decreased by 2.2 points). At the same time, the results of the control group remained virtually unchanged, with the exception of professional motivation, which became higher.

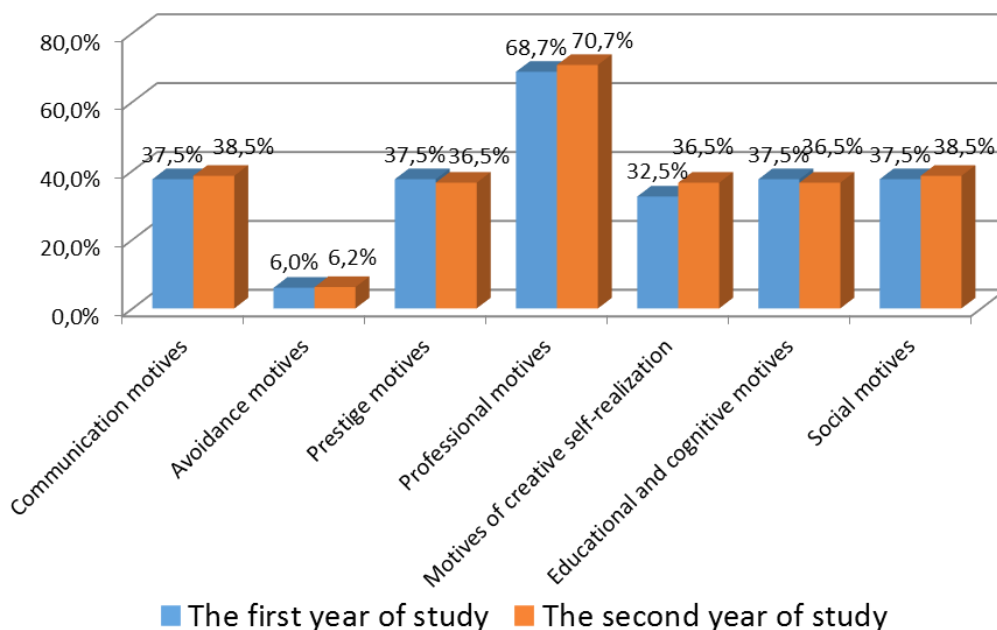


Figure 2. The results of studying educational motivation in the control group

Now let us consider the motives for choosing a profession and their dynamics at the control stage.

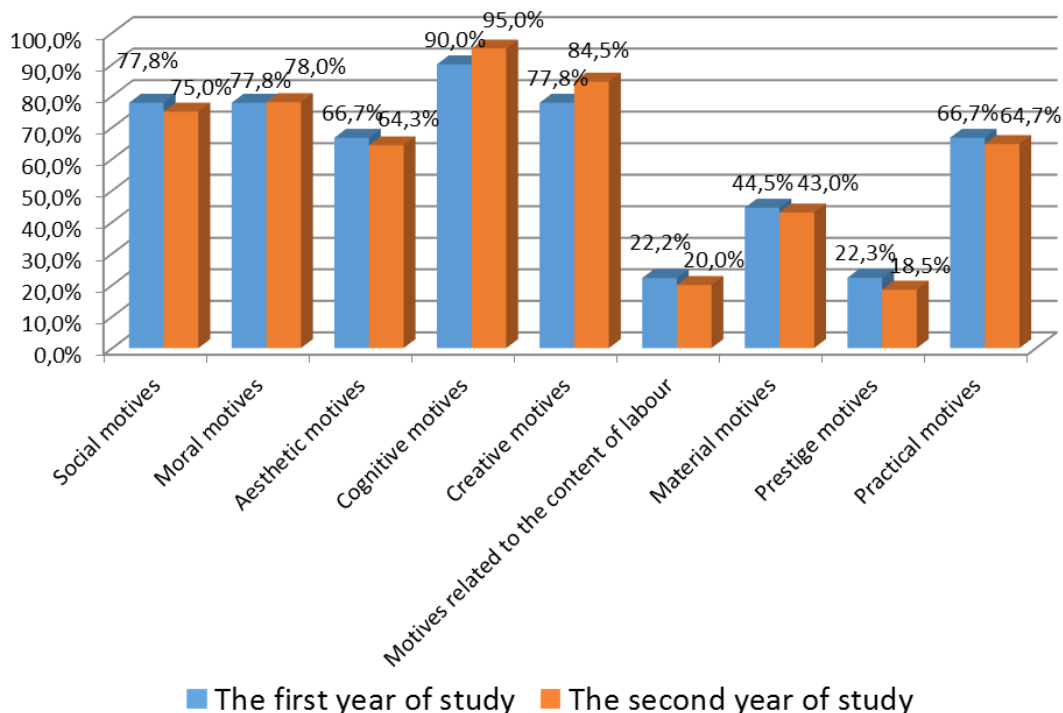


Figure 3. The results of studying the key motives for choosing a profession

Proceeding from this, we can state that in their second year the students became more interested in mastering the special knowledge necessary for professional activity (in comparison with their first year). In addition, they strive to show more originality in their work, learn new things and engage in creative activities.

At the same time, there are insignificant positive changes in the control group. The statistical analysis did not reveal any meaningful differences, but those within the scale “Educational and cognitive motives” are close to statistically significant ones. They demonstrate the most considerable positive changes indicating the students’ desire to acquire new knowledge without assistance.

The comparison of the initial and final indicators of assessing the students’ leading educational motives did not reveal any meaningful differences. This suggests that in the second year of study the ratio of internal and external motivation to learning remained at approximately the same development level as in the first year of study, when internal motivation slightly prevailed over external one.

The level of external motivation decreased in comparison with the indicators in the first year of study. In addition, in the experimental group, the average group indicators increased by 0.5 and 1.4 points on the “knowledge acquisition” and “mastering a profession” scales (respectively) and decreased by 1.4 points on the “obtaining a diploma” scale.

The conducted empirical research enabled us to draw the following conclusions:

1. The implementation of the training programme contributes to more effective development of students’ educational motivation, in contrast to groups in which this programme is not used.

2. Within the training group, students become more focused on mastering the profession and acquiring professional knowledge, skills and abilities.

3. The process of developing students’ educational motivation in the training group is accompanied by the predominance of internal motivation over external one.

4. The effectiveness of developing students’ educational motivation is due to a number of pedagogical conditions:

- using a training programme for the development of students’ educational motivation;
- testing the acquired knowledge in practice by solving professional tasks;
- students’ awareness of their own learning goals;
- focusing on students’ intense activity during classes;
- rewards for participation in competitions, forums, roundtable discussions and scientific conferences;
- assessing knowledge through the score-saving system.

Conclusion

The theoretical analysis of scientific literature shows that the problem of motivation belongs to the pivotal psychological and pedagogical issues. Motivation as a mental phenomenon is a complex structural formation, which reflects the process of motives formation and determines a person’s mental vector and behaviour.

The conducted empirical study of educational motivation in future psychologists allows us to conclude that the effectiveness of motivation development is due to a number of pedagogical conditions:

- using the training programme to develop the students' educational motivation;
- assessing knowledge through the score-saving system;
- focusing on students' intense activity during classes;
- testing the acquired knowledge in practice by solving professional tasks;
- students' awareness of their own learning goals;
- rewards for participation in competitions, forums, roundtable discussions and scientific conferences.

The positive dynamics of developing the students' educational motivation within the experimental group allows us to conclude about the effectiveness of the implemented training programme.

Therefore, we fulfilled the set tasks and confirmed the proposed hypothesis. The practical significance of this study consists in the assessment programme and the programme for students' motivation development. The research may be proceeded with studying such aspect of students' motivation as identifying the gender specificity of educational motivation development.

Conflict of interests: The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

Authors' contribution: The authors have participated in the research process, in the writing of the work and in the analysis of the documents.

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