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The Sense-Motivation Basis of Young People's Participation in Volunteer Activity

The article is concerned with the analysis of European researches of the sense-motivation sphere of young people participating in a volunteer activity. The author brings forward her study of the sense-motivation sphere of young people. 160 young people (96 girls and 64 young men) aged 14–30 took part in the study. They were representatives of political, volunteer, religious youth public organizations, authors of their own volunteer projects, and also students of the Southern Federal University (SFedU) who have not been involved in such activities.

When drawing conclusions of the carried-out analysis of the diagnostics' results, the author states that they have succeeded in putting into practice a hypothetical assumption that it is possible to reveal life-sense strategies of young people which differ in a degree of their involvement in public activities. They have also formed symptom complexes for each of the distinguished types of personality which make it possible to define features of young people and subsequently develop methods of social-psychological support for each type of organizations.

Keywords: *young people, social activity, volunteering, social-political organizations, sense-motivation sphere.*

Countries of Western Europe have a considerable experience of the organization of volunteer movements and distribution of volunteering in the youth environment up today. Being a significant component of social life volunteering is also an actively developed scientific problem. Thus, in Great Britain there is an institute studying this social phenomenon. The analysis of researches and experience of the organization of volunteer movement in Europe may become an important step on a way of development of the appropriate program of socio-psychological support of youth in Russia.

Modern society needs volunteers; they lay their hopes on volunteers. They expect that a successful involvement of young people in a volunteer activity will improve their social skills, will strengthen social unity, will promote the integration of "unsuccessful" youth, and will reduce a crime rate and antisocial behavior. The study of motives, inducements and results of the activity of young volunteers of England was an object of the research of Mark Hutin carried out in the Institute for Volunteering Research in 2006–2007.

During research they have established that 57 % of the interrogated young people took part in a volunteer activity. Thus educational institutions of various levels were the most popular place of work of the volunteer; the most popular occupation was organization and carrying out holidays. The majority of respondents specified that the desire to improve an order of things and to help other people were their main motivating factors. Almost all respondents speak of their volunteer experience in a positive manner [6].



Another research carried out in the same institute has profoundly analyzed motives of a volunteer activity and estimated the influence of a volunteer labour on development of the person. In the course of studying they have found out that the majority of students have had a volunteer experience before entering the institute of higher education. The most widespread motives were desire to help, get new acquaintances, add a positive article to own résumé. Besides, it was established that volunteering develops the skills of interpersonal communication necessary at employment: communicative abilities, ability to work in a team, social skills. At the same time, a volunteer develops specific skills, for example technical, or the "earnings potential" indirectly (K. Donahue, J. Russell) [2].

The research group of the National Centre for Public Engagement has come to similar conclusions. It has studied the role of volunteering in lives of students of higher educational institutions, and also results of the activity of the student's volunteer organizations. Authors of the study affirm that volunteering has a favorable impact both on student volunteers and on the general public. For the purpose of increase of results they recommend to encourage and make special mention of the contribution of each young volunteer.

The research work of Clare Holdsworth "Student Volunteers. A national profile" realized within two organizations – Volunteering England and the mentioned Institute for Volunteering Research was another large-scale research of student volunteers. Students of all levels of training took part in the research: from entering the institute of higher education to the magistracy graduating. In the course of studying they have established that 15 % of beginners were members of welfare institutions before entering the institute of higher education. The rating of a volunteer activity was the highest among students of medical, stomatological and social professions. The students belonging to ethnic minority, disabled students and students who have to care for a relative have also showed a high level of volunteer activity. This index was the lowest among the students trained in natural and technical sciences, construction, and planning. For the majority of respondents the desire to help people around was the main reason for volunteering. However younger students, students of natural sciences, and male students note "new acquaintances" as a major motivating factor [4].

Tiger de Souza has carried out a research in the context of the mutual influence of higher education and volunteer activity. He has considered sports volunteering and the influence of higher education on it. The researcher has established that involvement of students and people with higher education increases the quality of volunteer activity, and frequently it becomes a factor of their subsequent professional growth. The author finishes article by a reflection that today's investments into student's sports volunteering will be able to affect new generations of volunteers positively [7].

In Katherine Gaskin's work the literary data on the young people's relation to the volunteer work and their participation in the public work is analyzed and generalized. The author notes that a situation with a volunteer activity in Europe has rapidly changed at the beginning of the 2000th. The labor law started propagandizing volun-



teer activity as the center of the development of democratic society, which promoted an increase in the number of volunteers [3].

Meanwhile in foreign researches of the civil activity of young people they meet an opinion that the modern world with its orientation to individualistic needs and competition will inevitably promote the destruction of volunteering as a social phenomenon. However, Lesley Hustinx disproves the opinion that cultural process of "individualization" is a threat of young people's volunteer activity. On the example of studying the Belgian agency organizing international laborcamps the author shows how volunteering can help youth to govern own freedom and to make a successful choice in life. The work in the international labor camp may not just stimulate personal development (through the contact with other cultures in this case), but also reduce a lack of self-confidence of young people in relation to the future career [5].

Modern young volunteers have some traits which, apparently, the volunteer should not have: they are not devoted to a certain volunteer organization; they are selective in what they do and expect to make gains. However, the author considers that it is possible to combine such a "consumer" relation of the volunteer with a sincere feeling of unity, self-identification with the main precepts of the volunteer organization and a true fidelity to own work. With due regard for interests and needs of volunteers in the organization of their activity it is possible to provide a favorable development of volunteering, in a counterbalance to traditional ways of labor organization.

The stated researches enable us to make a complete picture of volunteering as a social phenomenon: to define motives and purposes of participation in this activity, to reveal potential volunteers, to plan the main activities. Youth public organizations are a powerful social resource but in order that this resource started functioning they need to develop the specialized programs which, in its turn, may be constructed on the basis of the study of the sense-motivation sphere of participants of public organizations of a various orientation.

We have carried out the research of sense-of-life strategies of young people's active social behavior in Rostov-on-Don in 2007–2011. 160 young people (96 girls and 64 young men) at the age from 14 to 30 took part in the study. Respondents were divided into two categories for convenience: those who were members of public organizations, and those who weren't. Thus, following the results of questioning, both categories were also divided into some groups. The first category (the members of public organizations) was divided into three groups according to the character of organizations: political, religious and voluntary. The group of political organizations was presented by members of two organizations representing various political blocks: the Rostov regional office of the All-Russian public organization the "Young guard of the United Russia" and the Union of Communist Youth. Representatives of two Christian confessions became respondents of the group of socio-religious organizations: the Orthodox Christians (the youth department of the "MORE" Rostov Eparchy, the isters of charity of various parishes of Rostov-on-Don) and Protestants (socio-religious or-



ganzation of the Baptist evangelicals – the “Great change” Teenage Club). The third group included volunteers who didn’t belong to certain organizations and members of public organizations of a non-political and non-religious character. These were “Young physicians of Don”, “Dance for life”, “Young journalists”, etc. The young people not participating in social movements were third-year and fourth-year students of Southern Federal University (faculties of psychology, chemistry, and history). Participants of the “forming” experiment – graduates of the “Step Towards Psychology” project and participants of the “Volunteer Service” youth club of the “Gift” Center for Work with Gifted Children of the Palace of Creativity of Children and Youth of Rostov-on-Don became an experimental group.

The diagnostics of the sense sphere of young people of a various degree of involvement in public activity was carried out by means of six diagnostic techniques directed on revealing the person’s orientation, assessment of the motivational sphere, sense-of-life and value orientations (“Approval Motivation”, “Achievement Motivation”, “Motivation to Achieve Success and a Fear of Failure”, “The Orientation (Position-Finding) Questionnaire”, D. A. Leontyev’s “Test of Sense-of-Life Orientations” and M. Rokich’s “Valuable orientations”). When analyzing the results of diagnostics we have distinguished seventeen scales. For the purpose of revealing sense-of-life strategies of participants of public organizations we have carried out the statistical analysis of the obtained data using a Mann-Whitney U-test. The analysis of the revealed intergroup distinctions by each scale has enabled us to establish reliable features of the sense sphere of each of groups of research.

By the results of the carried-out diagnostics we have formed symptom complexes of personal features of various groups of the young people participating in the public activity. The statistical determination of an average value in consideration of a confidence interval was the basis of it.

A Volunteer

The **motivational** personality **sphere** is mixed; they are characterized by a situational reaction now with domination of the aspiration to avoid failure, now with motivation to achieve success.

An orientation towards work is the dominating type of the **orientation of the person**. This type of orientation is characterized by the person’s interest in solving business problems, orientation towards business cooperation. Achieving success in the common cause is the main goal for the person.

The **sense-value sphere** of personality is characterized by rather high indices of the scales of “life process”, “result of life”, “locus of control – life”. Such a person perceives the past, the present and the future optimistically; he/she considers own previous life productive, finds the current process of life interesting, full of sense, thinks that the future is under his/her control.

Conformist values and values of acceptance of others are dominating which speaks about a pro-social personal orientation, but unreadiness to take a leading position in society.



A Politician

The **motivational** personality **sphere** is mixed; they are characterized by a situational reaction now with domination of the aspiration to avoid failure, now with success motivation.

An orientation towards work is the dominating type of the **orientation of the person**. The person is characterized by the interest in solving business problems, ability to defend own opinion which is useful for achievement of a common goal in interests of business.

The **sense-valuesphere of the person** is characterized by high indices of the scales "life purposes", "locus of control – self", "locus of control – life", "sensemaking in life". These results speak about the person's purposefulness, idea of self as of a strong person possessing sufficient freedom of choice to construct own life according to own representations, ability to control life, to make decisions and to implement them. Individualistic and self-affirmation values are the dominating. Both groups of values indicate the person's ambitions, aspiration for power and achievements.

A religious figure

The **motivational** personality **sphere** is characterized by the domination of the motivation to achieve success and high indices of achievement motivation. Starting a business the person aspires to achieve something constructive, positive. A hope of success and the need for success achievement is at the heart of his/her activity. Such people are usually confident in themselves, own strength; they are responsible, initiative and active. Persistence in goal achievement, purposefulness characterize them.

The considered type of personality has two dominating types of **orientation**: orientation towards communication and orientation towards business. The combination of these types of orientation may speak about the person's aspiration to maintain relations with people, orientations towards joint activity, business cooperation.

The **sense-value sphere of the person** is characterized by high indices of all scales, including the integrated index of sense meaning of life. The dominating values are values of acceptance of others and altruistic values which point to an extreme importance of a volunteer activity, helping other people. For this type of personality a man is the highest value.

An Author of the Project

The **motivational** personality **sphere** of is characterized by the domination of the motivation to achieve success and high indices of achievement motivation. Starting a business the person aspires to achieve something constructive, positive. A hope of success and the need for success achievement is at the heart of his/her activity. Such people are usually confident in themselves, own strength; they are responsible, initiative and active. Persistence in goal achievement and purposefulness characterize them.

An orientation towards communication is the dominating type of **orientation**. Aspiration to maintain relations with people, orientation towards joint activity, need for attachment and emotional relations with people characterize them.



The **sense-value sphere of the person** is characterized by high indices of all scales, including the integrated index of sensemeaning of life. The dominating values are values of acceptance of others and altruistic values; individualistic values are less expressed, however, it is enough to consider it a characteristic of personality. Respectively, it is possible to assume that such people are oriented towards surrounding people, helping and supporting them by means of personal and professional development.

When drawing conclusions of the carried-out analysis of the results of diagnostics, we may state that we have succeeded in realizing in practice a hypothetical assumption of the possibility of the revealing of sense-of-life strategies of the young people differing in a degree of their involvement in public activities. We have also formed symptom complexes for each of the distinguished types of personality which make it possible to define features of young people and develop methods of socio-psychological support for each type of organizations.

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