

## **STUDENTS' MOTIVATION AT DIFFERENT PHASES OF GETTING HIGHER EDUCATION (THE CASE OF RUSSIA)**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The problem of motivation is one of the most important in determining the driving mechanisms that force a person to learn, work, master something new. Motivation to work is one of the key elements of challenging yourself on the way to self-development. Motivation has deep psychological and moral roots and is a complex multifaceted phenomenon that often defies logical comprehension. In addition, it is an ephemeral, elusive thing; it is not a permanent feature of a person in one or another area of his activity. Accordingly, it is the problem of origin, retention, and in a good scenario of strengthening the motivation that is in one of the first place among the tasks that modern teachers face.

Rapid scientific and technological development and progress in various fields of knowledge, new scientific and technical discoveries and the need for new high-tech developments require specialists with a high level of education and high-quality professional training. This applies not only to scientific and technical spheres, but also to natural-applied and humanitarian areas. All this makes higher education today a prestigious and extremely attractive goal for most young people, making young people use their studies at a university as a social lift for further personal development and career development. At the same time, a situation is observed when entering universities, many young people are faced with a serious problem of lack of motivation to learn, or they are demotivated in the learning process, which often leads to a very low level of quality of their studies, and sometimes makes them interrupt study for academic leave or give it up completely.

Pedagogical science has accumulated a wealth of experience in studying this problem, however, the modern challenges of a changing world require pedagogy to constantly monitor changes and search for new approaches to solving the problems that students have in the course of obtaining higher education.

The authors study this problem, taking as an example Russia, which is a country at the crossroads of Europe and Asia, where features of European and Eastern culture are combined in people. The authors approached the issue from several important angles. The article analyzes the socio-economic and political characteristics that affect the motivation for learning among young people. Particular attention is paid to the state of the current Russian society, spiritual and

moral guidelines of young people, their goals and views on life and their own future. The authors emphasize the importance of family, religion and spiritual and moral development in the issue of motivation to work and study.

The authors come to the conclusion that the problem of lack of motivation is based on a combination of reasons, but its root is primarily in the family upbringing of the student, as well as in his moral component and emotional and psychological maturity of the individual. The article provides an overview and some of the changes in student motivation associated with the COVID-19 pandemic and online learning.

It is important to note that in the course of their research, the authors relied on their many years of experience in teaching at higher educational institutions in Russia.

***Keywords:** motivation for learning, psychological and pedagogical problems, pedagogical process, higher education, modern youth, problems of education in Russia*

## INTRODUCTION

Motivation is an engine for human action and an integral part of any professional and personal growth. This impulse is especially important in the process of obtaining education, which is inseparable from many difficulties and constant overcoming. Overcoming lies in the development and formation of the personality, however, despite the euphony of this postulate, not every personality is able to develop in the course of receiving education.

In this article, the authors primarily talk about higher education as a process of voluntary conscious intellectual labor of an adult (mature) person.

Obtaining higher education is a complex, difficult, time-consuming, financial and energy-consuming activity, through which mainly young people who want to acquire professional skills and receive a higher education diploma are forced to go.

For a young person, the decision on the need for higher education is often born under the influence of parents, family, close circle and school. It is good if this decision coincides with the young person's very need for self-development and obtaining new professional knowledge. However, often such a decision comes from the outside and is imposed, and for young people 17-18 years old - the age of admission to universities, it is quite difficult to figure out whether he really wants to get a higher education and what profession to choose.

In addition, modern world trends, characterized by rapid scientific and technological development and progress in various fields of knowledge, also have

a great influence. The latest scientific and technical discoveries and the need for new high-tech developments require specialists with a high level of education and high-quality professional training. This applies not only to scientific and technical spheres, but also to natural-applied and humanitarian areas. It is these areas that attract young professionals and serve as an incentive for obtaining high-quality higher education. Prestigious areas of work are an attractive target for students and graduates, providing a social lift for further career development.

However, finding themselves within the walls of the university, young people realize that they still have a long way to a successful career, and in the coming years they have to work hard, gaining knowledge, and not receiving a salary. When entering universities, many young people face a serious problem of lack of motivation to learn, or are demotivated in the process of study, which often leads to a very low level of quality of their studies, and sometimes makes them interrupt their studies.

## **METHODS AND METHODOLOGY**

The authors applied the following methods: synthesis, analysis, abstraction, observation, case study.

With the help of such general scientific methods as synthesis and analysis, the general state of the issue is studied, and its main features are also highlighted.

The abstraction method helped the authors to consider the subject, during which they identified the essential sides and properties (while abstraction of other signs) of the problem raised. The observation method was used for a retrospective study of the general situation in Russian society and education, which in turn led to the fact that the authors, using the case-study method appropriate in this case, considered the issue of motivation to study in universities in relation to a particular country.

## **RESULTS**

The problem of motivation has more than a century-long of history. The works of such scientists as A. Pfender (Pfänder A. «Motive und Motivation», 1911), P.T. Young («Motivation and Behavior», 1936) and others are devoted to this problem. There are different approaches, theories and methods of studying it, though, the problem is still very actual at it comes along with new challenges and modern questions.

Among the main approaches to the problem of motivation, the following three main approaches can be distinguished: the first approach is based on the theory of instinct. The founder of this trend are considered W. McDougall and his followers - Konrad Lorenz and Niko Tinbergen. According to this theory, human behavior is based on instincts and impulses [1].

The second area of study of motivation is based on a theoretical and personal approach. Here we can trace the line of personality psychology (motivation is the key to describing and understanding personality and individual differences), or the line of the psychology of motivation (motivation is a process that explains actual behavior). The founders of this trend are considered W. Wundt, A. Maslow, C. Darwin, S. Freud, who argued that a person's ability to draw conclusions from acquired experience allows him to quickly adapt to changing conditions and thereby preserve his appearance [1].

The third direction is associated with an interest in changing the associations between stimulus and response, i.e. based on an associative-theoretic approach. Here we should highlight such scientists as J. Watson, E. Thorndike, I. Pavlov, who believed that human consciousness is the result of the development of the nervous system. According to this theory, the main role in human behavior is played by situational factors, a person's control of external and internal stimuli, for example, attraction [1].

Motivation can be divided into two types: external and internal. However, the second type cannot be formed without the first: an internal need can appear only due to external influences. The question is how much this «need» becomes really the student's one. It depends both on the personality of the student and on the way of teaching [2].

The problem of motivation acquires an important role when we talk about motivation in a learning activities. The educational activity of students is characterized by a combination of different motivations and depends on: the choice of the educational institution by the educational system, on the basis of which educational activity is implemented; organization of the educational process; the subjective characteristics of the student (age, gender, intellectual development, abilities, level of aspirations, self-esteem, etc.); the subjective characteristics of the teacher and, first of all, the system of his relationship to the student and his professional activities; the specifics of the subject, student motivation, etc. The motivation of students is an important structural component of learning activities. A disdainful attitude towards taking into account the age and psychological characteristics of students, the inability to combine the principles of teaching and upbringing in teaching - these are the factors that play a negative role in building effective teaching in universities.

The current situation in the system of higher education in Russia shows that its restructuring primarily means a more differentiated, purposeful impact on each student as a subject of educational activity, a partner of pedagogical communication. This formulation of the question presupposes the need for a deeper understanding of the student's psychology, knowledge of his age and personality characteristics.

The current system, formed in the industrial era, has long been out of tune with the present. Today it is not enough to have a certain set of knowledge and competencies - a person needs to be able to learn, find the necessary information and use it for his own purposes. There are many sources of knowledge now: school and institute are just a few of them, not even the most important ones. At the same time, reading books is no longer perceived as one of the ways to form a full-fledged personality. The priorities are shifting towards obtaining information of a different kind and type, first of all - entertaining. The stream of TV programs, Internet sites has firmly conquered modern man. It is easier to find the information you need on the Internet than to pick up a good book and set yourself up for a long thought process, which should become a starting point in the formation of a personality. A natural question arises: do we need a reading or well-informed graduate of an educational institution now? [2]

The state of the education system in modern Russia bears the imprint of a general spiritual crisis caused by the systemic reforms of the late twentieth century. The transition to market principles of the functioning of the economy caused the commercialization of educational activities as well, which manifested itself in the discrepancy between teaching and upbringing of young people.

The Covid 19 pandemic has created new challenges for educators and students, as well as everyone involved in the education process. It is in the context of a pandemic and ubiquitous distance learning, when the fragile connection between the teacher and the student is tested by the remote form of work and the remoteness of two actors from each other, that the question arises of how much the teacher is able to maintain and develop the involvement of students in the educational process, even in correspondence form, and how much the student is interested in his own studies, how deep is his motivation to stay in the learning process in a distance format. On the one hand, online and distance learning opened additional loopholes for students, led to an increase in poor-quality work, on the other hand, this situation reflected the existing problem of lack of motivation. Most of the students have shown their inadequacy to overcome new difficulties or use the current situation for good. The Russian people have a wonderful opposite example. Russian poet A.S. Pushkin in 1830 went to his estate in the village of Boldino to solve some financial issues. He was not going to stay there for long, but the outbreak of a cholera epidemic forced him to stay in the village for three months. During this time, about 30 poems were created, the novel in verse «Eugene Onegin» was completed, the cycles «Little Tragedies» and «The Tales of Belkin» were written, as well as two cycles of critical articles. During Boldinskaya autumn (Autumn in Boldino), the poet mastered English on his own.

Learning activities do not bring satisfaction to modern students. Even successful students go to classes reluctantly, because they receive educational services, and do not learn to live. The younger generation remains the «generation of viewers». Students view learning outside of spiritual guidelines and interconnections - as a process of passing the formal institutions necessary for

success in life, and not as a path to spiritual and professional self-realization. Thus, the relationship «teacher - student» has ceased to be a cultural model, highly significant and valued by society in the past. The decline in the rank of creative professional labor as a value was reflected in the massive unwillingness to learn and the resulting general decline in the quality of education at all levels. The curtailment of the spiritual and educational component in educational activities largely contributes to the fact that the traditional for domestic culture ideas about the unity and close relationship of knowledge and spirituality are becoming a thing of the past. As a result, a significant part of today's youth turned out to be incapable of self-determination in life in the new harsh modern conditions of society, without rejecting universal human values.

In the Russian Empire, education, and especially higher education, was the highest gift of people of wealthy, noble origin, access to it was also available to the poor, who distinguished themselves with a special talent and had the support of respected persons. At the same time, higher education was a blessing of the elite and was valued on a par with nobility and social status. It would seem that after the Revolution of 1917 and during the Soviet period, access to higher education was provided to all Soviet citizens without exception. However, it is necessary to take into account the fact that with the change of the political and socio-political system, the most basic values have not changed. The desire for education, especially higher education, has increased. The Soviet republic needed new educated specialists to solve the problems of industrialization and modernization. Against this background, the formation of the Soviet education system was observed, inheriting the best from the education system of the Russian Empire, and bringing a lot of new things into this system, which strengthened it and made it very interesting and original. At the same time, the formation of the so-called «Soviet man» was going on, it was a type of personality that included the moral and ethical norms of the communist code. Reading scientific and fictional literature, drama theater, creative meetings with persons of science, culture and art have become an integral part of the life of Soviet people. Poets and writers became the voice of society and set spiritual guidelines. Famous people of art, science and education laid the foundation of the social environment in which a person was formed from childhood. The teacher was a guide to the world of professional qualifications, and most importantly, he introduced students to the best examples of spiritual culture. His authority, on an equal footing with the authority of the older generation of the family, was indisputable. The teacher was more than a knowledge holder. He was a patron, a mentor, a model of behavior. The educational institution was actually a second home, where the student was constantly surrounded by educated people who devoted themselves to pedagogical activities, the atmosphere was filled with intellectual exchange, creativity and mutual assistance. Due to the Pioneer and Komsomol organizations, any student was a part of a large social project to create a Soviet society, a participant in the improvement of the country and a creator in his area. And most importantly, education was free, and only those who passed the most difficult

exams and were able to take the maximum from education were worthy of higher education.

We see that over the course of Russian history, a cultural tradition of the unity of spirituality and education has developed.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union and the thoughtless imposition of capitalist values, the ideal of an educated person's service to his people was devalued. The teacher has lost his high social status. It is extremely important that each teacher is aware of himself not as a downtrodden personality, but as a holder of one of the world's greatest pedagogical cultures and is worthy of this culture. And for this he needs to rise to the ideals inherent in Russian education, to see and accept the origins of his humanism in the traditions and rules of folklife. Can this be done by a teacher who is himself a product of modern society?

And here we come to the main point. A teacher deprived of the highest status, transformed by a modern education system borrowed from the West into a service staff who provides educational services to all who paid is not able to become the example that would motivate students. The system itself, devoid of elitism, selectivity, and the elimination of those who do not want and cannot study, is not capable of making higher education a significant human achievement. Modern Russian society, where people of education and science receive less pay than people of business and commerce, cannot serve as an example for their students. Looking around, students see that the lack of education is not an obstacle to finding a job, and education itself has little effect on their personality and only teaches them how to get out and cope with tasks in the course of the educational process according to the principle «it'll do» in order to get the coveted diploma and forget about studying as a wasted time.

The role of the family cannot be underestimated either. If back in Soviet times, parents were most often the first or second generation with higher education and it served them as the highest value, which was instilled in children, then after the reforms of the 1990s, a whole generation of people was formed who are used to living by material values, which they are in turn instill in their children. People whose values lie only in the material plane, accustomed to the quick acquisition, quick consumption, spiritual fast food are not able to appreciate the spiritual and moral values, are not able to accumulate knowledge step by step, are not inclined to deep thinking and analytical activity. They want to snatch, but real knowledge accumulates slowly, requires comprehension and a deep serious approach, it does not tolerate fuss. But can a modern student work like that? As soon as he realizes the difficulty and slowness of the process, he sees that he needs to put in a lot of effort and he is not used to work, since he gets everything ready-made, he loses motivation to study, to obtain a professional university degree.

It should be noted that since Russia is both a European and Asian country, the Russian people have absorbed the features of both European and Eastern

characters. European traits are manifested in Russian students in their desire to have their own opinion, independence, liberal views, and a certain pragmatism in their work. At the same time, certain oriental (Asian or traditional Russian) features are also inherent in the Russian person. This is mainly laziness and the hope that everything will somehow be resolved by itself, without making any efforts of its own.

So, the main directions of the reform of Russian education should be a turn to the person, an appeal to his spirituality, the revival of the prestige of education. It is impossible to remake people and turn the family into a place where the child's most important moral guidelines are laid, value attitudes are formed without the formation of a certain moral and ethical code, which would be based on Christian views, humanism, respect for elders, mutual respect and freedom from material shackles...

Russia and Russian education today, first of all, need a state policy to revive spirituality in its true sense. The authors would like to propose such methods as reading classical literature (the idea that a modern young person is too far from reading the classics and from its content is pernicious), such subjects as the history of Christianity (without taking into account the ethnic composition classes), ethics, art history are needed in schools. The continuity of generations also plays an important role, therefore, emphasis should be placed on national history. It is necessary to create youth volunteer organizations engaged in charitable and social projects, where schoolchildren would be accustomed to work and responsibility to themselves and others. All these steps should be carried out flexibly, unobtrusively, generating interest, and not generating rejection.

A student who is accustomed to comprehending knowledge and working on himself is able to continue his studies at the university. Such a student will be aware of the importance and necessity of higher education, which leads him to obtain a profession, and will in itself become the main motivation for learning. Not money, not a potential salary, but an interest in learning and the excitement of overcoming oneself should be motivated to study.

## **CONCLUSION**

The article deals with the problem of motivation in learning, mainly in universities. Since motivation is one of the most important impulses for self-development through study, the authors believe that it is necessary to look for ways to solve this problem. The authors focused on the consideration of the psychological and moral reasons for the lack of motivation, which are a consequence of the manifestation of the crisis in Russian education, which is directly dependent on the crisis phenomena in society.

The problem of motivation was studied using the example of Russian university students. The article mentions the socio-economic and political

transformations that have influenced the motivation for learning among young people. The authors came to the conclusion that the state of the current Russian society has led to the loss of the spiritual and moral guidelines of young people, the erosion of their goals and the distortion of their views on life and their own future. The authors see that certain elements of solving the problem lie in the plane of improving the moral foundations of the Russian family, increasing interest in the Christian religion and moral development, which would have a beneficial effect on motivation to work and study. Pandemic Covid 19 and online learning have played an important role in uncovering existing problems.

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