

ASSESSMENT OF OWN LIFE PROSPECTS AS A FACTOR OF STUDENT'S ACADEMIC MOTIVATION

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Abstract

The paper analyzes life perspective indexes and life purpose orientations of sample students enrolled into an integrated learning environment. A comparative analysis of the data on students with disabilities and healthy students was performed. Characteristics of interrelation between value and life purpose orientation indexes and students' academic motivation were researched. Dual determination of human behavior by temporal factors was stated: the first type defines behavior regulation within a short period of time, in specific situations, activities, and the second one determines behavior regulation for a long time and is associated with planning of well-aimed self-development

***Key words:** life prospects, life purpose orientations, value orientation, self-fulfilment, academic motivation, integrated learning environment.*

Introduction

The current stage of psychological science development is characterized with post-non-classical approaches for scientific studies where a person is regarded as an active self-determined subject, a creator of their own life. Post-non-classical psychology insists on impossibility to study a human in isolation from the context of their life, it considers such problems as life's journey, lifestyle, life strategies, goals and meaning of a person's life as the most important ones.

The emphasis at specialists' training is shifting from the competence-based approach to self-development and personal fulfilment. In this context, a problem of future professionals' academic motivation as a self-determined and self-organized process occupies a central place.

Thus, vocational education becomes for a person and their life perspective, to some extent, a guarantee of the future. Therefore, relationship of person's academic motivation with life goals, perspectives and values determines person's potential for development in the future, and satisfaction in the present, and reveals essential forces of self-realization and psychological well-being for future professionals.

Studying of a personal life perspective is an important problem of psychology, but it has not been investigated properly yet. Studying of the life plans, objectives, prospects is usually focused on person's conscious conception about their future.

The mostly employed approach in psychology is an approach to studying life prospects associated with subject's development and personality formation, where person's activity and creativity are crucial factors of life transformation, and life strategy availability and sophistication are important indicators of person's being as an own life subject (Абульханова-Славская, 1991).

The problem of life perspective is related to the problem of personal time, so it belongs to subjective parameters of time, to determination of its value. Абульханова-Славская (1991) proposes to distinguish psychological, personal and life perspectives as three different phenomena.

A psychological perspective is a person's ability to predict the future consciously in cognitive terms, to make prognoses, to visualize themselves in the future, and this ability depends on a personality type. Therefore, some people have an idea about their future associated with a professional choice, others connect the future with claims in personal life (friends, love, family). These differences and perspective variety are caused by young people's desires to have self-realization in the areas of life that are the most appropriate to their value orientations.

A personal perspective means commitment to the future in the present, preparedness to difficulties in the future, its uncertainty. The personal perspective is an indicator of personal maturity, their development potential, and existing ability to organize time.

Life perspective is a more meaningful and profound concept that includes a set of circumstances and conditions of life that under otherwise equal conditions create opportunities for optimal life-promoting, self-development, self-actualization.

Person's activity in every aspect of life is important for life perspective formation. Activity serves as the need for actions and identifies goals, directions, motives, and is a source of personal potential. Activity performs multiple roles, serving all areas of a person's life, enhances life plans and manifests itself in self-realization, in timely actions, in self-expression as a manifestation of own self in life.

Ability of subject's life regulation is based on origin and development of personal concepts that give people freedom from a current stimulation and is the basis of the self-determination. Lines of formation of a personality, of a subject and of a conceptual system for human activity regulation create natural unity (Карпинский, 2002). Development of personal concept sphere brings a person to the highest level of own development as a subject of own life (Анциферова, 1999), that is characterized by a qualitatively new way of self-organization and self-direction (Брушлинский, 1991).

Formation of a personality as a subject of own life is associated with formation of life plans (Абульханова-Славская, 1991; Головаха & Кроник, 1984; Карпинский, 2002; Логинова, 1985 etc.) and mechanisms of behavior and activity regulation (Леонтьев, 2002) that cover main areas of life and specify its overall meaning. All these studies reveal mainly the content of value-concept regulation of life sustenance, but its dynamic principles were studied much less. The dynamic characteristics of conception include tension that occurs when personal existential expectations are compared with a current life situation.

Based on these problems, the aim of the research is to identify the impact of students' own life perspective on academic motivation.

Object of the research is academic motivation of university students.

Subject of the research is the value-concept determinants of academic motivation of university students.

Method

Review of the problem of academic motivational determination for a personality in an integrated learning environment, which can be regarded as a model of value environment, opens

possibility to study motivational system organization of healthy students, who are considered to be a “norm”, as well as students with physical illness and disabilities. Importance of study of academic motivation for university students trained in integrated groups also increases due to increase of a part of young people with disabilities in universities.

The empirical study involved 436 students with disabilities and 355 healthy students who are enrolled in the integrated learning environment.

The following psychological diagnostic methods have been used: morphological test of values (Сопов & Карпушина, 2002); the technique “Assessment of five-year intervals” (Головаха & Кроник, 1984); the method of academic motivation examination in universities by Пуина (Практическая психодиагностика, 2002); Purpose-in Life Test by Crambo, Makholik adapted by Leontiev (Леонтьев, 1992); the questionnaire to measure achievement motivation by Mehrabian modified by Mohammed-Eminov (Фетискин, Козлов, & Мануйлов, 2002); the questionnaire to measure achievement motivation by Ehlers (Практическая психодиагностика, 2002).

Methods of empirical data processing and interpretation: quantitative and qualitative analysis (descriptive statistics, comparison of sample means by Student’s t-test, correlation analysis). Processing of the empirical results was carried out using the statistical software package SPSS 19.0 for Windows.

Results and Discussion

A system of personal meanings is a recognized, internalized part of a person’s value system. Study of life purpose orientations of the students from the chosen groups that form the basis of their self-image was performed with the Purpose-in Life Test (Леонтьев, 1992). The Table 1 shows the obtained results.

Table 1. Life purpose orientations of the students from the integrated groups

		Life purposes	Life process	Life results	Locus of control - self	Locus of control - life	The overall index of meaningfulness of life
Students with disabilities		29,6	28,1	23,1	18,7	27,6	93,6
	Md	30,0	29,0	23,0	19,0	29,0	95,0
	Mo	33 ^a	30	24	16 ^a	25 ^a	98 ^a
	S _x	7,6	6,8	5,1	4,9	7,5	20, 1
Healthy students		30,8	30,7	24,5	21,7	30,3	112,9
	Md	30,0	32,0	25,0	22,0	31,0	109,1
	Mo	33	32	24	24	27	109
	S _x	7,7	6,1	4,1	5,1	6,8	27,1

Note: – mean; Md – median; Mo – mode; S_x – standard deviation; a – There are several modes available, the smallest one was chosen

In performing the analysis of the data presented in the table, it should be noted that the major part of the tested students are characterized by high levels (25-42) at the test scales, so they can be described as goal-directed people who perceive their life processes as interesting, emotionally rich and full of meaning, and a spent part of their lives is productive

and meaningful. This part of the sample has sufficient freedom of choice to build their lives in accordance with their aims and beliefs about life purposes, they have a clear belief that a person can control own life, make decisions freely and implement them.

However, there is a number of the subjects who have low levels at the test scales. The students with disabilities have two modes, 33 and 34 points, at the “life purpose” scale, points of this scale characterize presence or absence of life purposes in the future for the subjects, providing life meaningfulness, focus and temporal perspective. 24% of the students with disabilities and 17% of the healthy students have low scores at this scale. 9% of the students with disabilities and 3.4% of the healthy students have low scores (less than 17) at the “life process” scale that shows an interest for life and its emotional intensity, which means that this part of the students are dissatisfied with their lives at present. 4.8% of the students with disabilities and 4.1% of the healthy students have low scores (less than 14) at the “life results” scale or the self-realization and satisfaction index, indicating dissatisfaction with the spent part of life. 9.7% of the students with disabilities and 2.7% of the healthy students do not believe (less than 11 points) into their strength and abilities to control events of own life (the “locus of control – self” scale). This scale is characterized by two modes with 16 and 20 points for the students with disabilities. 11.7% of the students with disabilities and 4.1% of the healthy students show low scores (less than 17) at the “locus of control – life” scale, i.e. ability to manage own life, so they are characterized by the belief that human life cannot be controlled consciously, that freedom of choice is rather illusory. Indexes of students with disabilities for this scale have two modes but both are high – 25 and 34 points.

In general, it can be said that life of modern students is characterized by meaningfulness, availability of goals, plans for the future, but prospects for the future are not always supported by faith in their capabilities. It is not always possible to observe a clear correlation of purposes with the future, emotional intensity with the present, pleasure with the results, the past.

In functional terms, there are temporal factors that determine behavior in two ways. The first type defines behavior within a short period of time, in specific situations, activities, and the second one defines behavior regulation for a long time and is associated with planning by a person of targeted changes and self-development. This type is based on self-knowledge of mechanisms to capture own internal reserves for self-realization.

Studying of relationship between subjective length of time and various activity characteristics has a long history and achievements, including relations with nature of personal activities, attitude toward work, level of motivation and emotional states (Фресс & Пиаже, 1978); it was found out that levels of intelligence and personal anxiety influence temporal perspective and events during life course; it was found out that also a certain time order of the major events of life is represented in minds of different members of social groups, that order retardation is perceived subjectively as a failure, which means that vision of the future is not a phenomenon of self-consciousness only, but also determined by objective social factors (Головаха & Кроник, 1984). Mental age change occurs whenever a person is dissatisfied with their chronological age because of a variety of reasons. Psychological age not only depends on the ratio of the past, the present and the future and on life expectancy, but also on personal time localization about the center of the chronological time axis.

In terms of personal development complicated by disabilities, temporal decentralization is almost obvious for the point of view of a life way. However, disability, on the one hand, is a drawback, weakness, limitation of development, but, on the other hand, it also stimulates increased, enhanced moving forward; so compensation, as a response to the individual defect, gives rise to new, roundabout processes of development, replaces, overbuilds, adjusts psychological functions. Such a person should consider their life not from a passive observer’s position, but actively, creatively react to own life. Since psychological age is determined,

above all, by a part of realized events and their links in an overall structure, it can be changed by a personality through rehabilitation of these links: to review perspective, to rethink a role of past events and their impact on the present and the future.

“Assessment of five-year intervals” technique (Головаха & Кроник, 1984) has been used to identify possible regulations of personal consciousness and behavior through the study of the perception of links between the past, the present and the future in the structure of psychological time, which made it possible to identify a number of interesting features of students with disabilities and healthy students. The results are shown in the Table 2.

Table 2. Average values of students subjective evaluation of life course

		Lifetime	Feeling of being actualized	Psychological age	Real age	Estimation of the past	Estimation of the present	Estimation of the future	
Students from the integrated groups	with disabilities		64,6	0,36	24,3	19,5	4,9	6,3	6,9
		S_x	16,4	0,08	4,5	2,5	1,9	1,6	1,8
	healthy		82,7	0,23	21,9	19,4	3,4	5,6	6,3
		S_x	9,7	0,06	2,1	2,3	1,2	1,2	1,6

Note – mean S_x – standard deviation

The presented data show that students with disabilities have indicators of life expectancy significantly lower than healthy subjects, 21.6 years at average. They are also characterized by relatively large scatter of the data (standard deviation).

The index of actualization, which depends on the proportion of spent life in the subjective picture of life, is lower for the healthy student, that shows slightly higher estimation of life perspectives for these people, but this index for the students with disabilities is also within the normal range for this age group. Because the index of actualization is connected with life satisfaction, which is one of the main aspects of personal subjective well-being, it is an integral assessment by a subject of own life. High rates of life satisfaction indicate retention by a personality of own self, reinforce a desire to remain unchanged, so a very high level of satisfaction with life decreases developmental potential. As for life quality assessment, it is important to balance both lines (preservation and change).

It was found out that person’s psychological age, which is an integral indicator of person’s attitude to the time of life, of the healthy students is close to chronological age. This index for the students with disabilities is slightly higher than that of the healthy subjects, while there is a large scatter of data: only 40% of students with disabilities have adequate chronological age, the age of 27% is within 14 years that may be an indicator of an unrealized creative potential or immaturity. Age of 33% is within 28 years, and this may be a cause of pessimism and poorer life prospects and may be accompanied by severe consumptive and hedonistic orientations.

In general, assessments of the five-year life intervals, their levels, indicating of person’s attitude to the present, the past and the future, show high importance of student days in the life of both healthy students and students with disabilities, few 10-point estimates suggests the rational perception of own being.

Correlation analysis between indicators of value and life purpose orientations and motivational indicators was performed on the samples of students with disabilities and healthy students. The data are presented in Tables 3-8.

Table 3. Correlations between indicators of value orientations and motivational indicators for students with disabilities

	Life values							
	Self-development	Spiritual satisfaction	Creativity	Active social contacts	Own prestige	Achievements	High wealth	Preservation of self
Acquisition of knowledge	0,46**	0,33**	0,24*	0,22*	0,27*	0,23*	-0,04	0,23*
Profession acquisition	0,36**	0,38**	0,36**	0,32**	0,17	0,23	0,16	0,29**
Receiving of diploma	-0,12	0,12	0,01	0,30**	0,49**	0,12	0,25*	0,06
Success motivation	0,35**	0,41**	0,33**	0,35**	0,38**	0,35**	0,22*	0,28**
Achievement motivation	-0,15	-0,13	-0,18	-0,05	-0,05	-0,08	-0,11	-0,07

Note: ** correlation is significant at the 0.001 level; * correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

The data in Table 3 shows that “acquisition of knowledge” and “the profession” motives of students with disabilities, which are internal academic motives, significantly correlate with the values of “self development”, “spiritual satisfaction”, “creativity”, “active social contacts”, i.e. the values of humanistic orientation.

The “receiving of diploma” motive is related with the values of “active social contacts”, “own prestige” and “high wealth”. All value indexes are linked with “success motivation”. However, no connection between value sphere indexes and “achievement motivation” can be seen, and correlation coefficients have a negative sign, but it is obviously due to the fact that the level of “achievement motivation” is low and indicates “avoiding failure” motivation trend.

The data presented in the Table 4 show significant correlation between “acquisition of knowledge” and “profession acquisition” motives, related to intrinsic motivation, with values in the field of “training” and “education and a profession.” As for “success motivation”, these indicators correlate significantly with all spheres of life, which is quite logical.

Table 4. Correlation between life sphere indexes and motivation of students with disabilities

	Life sphere					
	Training	Education and a profession	Family	Social activity	Interests	Physical activity
Acquisition of knowledge	,30**	,36**	,19	-,03	,17	,03
Profession acquisition	,35**	,29**	,08	,28*	,25*	,03
Receiving of diploma	,06	,09	,05	,04	-,01	,19
Success motivation	,35**	,34**	,29**	,33**	,36**	,31*
Achievement motivation	-,13	-,08	-,09	-,12	-,18	-,11

Analysis of relationship between life purpose orientations and motivational indicators of students with disabilities (see Table 5) shows that the internal motives – “acquisition of knowledge” and “profession acquisition” – correlate in varying degrees with all indicators of life purpose orientations. They are linked mostly with “life purposes”, “locus of control – life” and “general meaningfulness of life.”

The fact draws attention that “achievement motivation” is associated very strongly and positively with the “receiving of diploma” motive, which belongs to externally determined motivation.

Table 5. Correlation between life purpose orientations and motivation of students with disabilities

	Life purposes	Life process	Life results	Locus of control - self	Locus of control - life	The overall index of meaningfulness of life	Achievement motivation
Acquisition of knowledge	0,56**	0,16*	0,34**	0,26**	0,42**	0,47**	-0,17
Profession acquisition	0,23**	0,23**	0,25**	0,34**	0,44**	0,44**	-0,17
Receiving of diploma	0,09	0,34**	0,06	-0,07	0,06	0,35**	0,48**
Success motivation	0,23*	0,29**	0,15	0,19	0,27**	0,28**	0,24*
Achievement motivation	-0,09	-0,13	-0,18*	-0,09	-0,05	-0,19*	1

Note: ** correlation is significant at the 0.001 level; * correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

Table 6 shows correlation between values and motivational indicators of the healthy students. These data are slightly different from those obtained from students with disabilities. So the “acquisition of knowledge” motive is not related to the “spiritual satisfaction” value, relationship with the “self-development” value is somewhat weaker. The “receiving of diploma” motive does not correlate with the “active social contacts” value in comparison with students with disabilities.

Table 6. Correlations between indicators of value orientations and motivational indicators for healthy students

	Life values							
	Self-development	Spiritual satisfaction	Creativity	Active social contacts	Own prestige	Achievements	High wealth	Preservation of self
Acquisition of knowledge	0,27*	0,13	0,24*	0,25*	0,06	0,23*	-0,04	0,19
Profession acquisition	0,37**	0,29*	0,25*	0,32*	0,19	0,22	-0,05	0,27*
Receiving of diploma	-0,11	0,12	0,01	0,16	0,46**	0,12	0,32**	0,05
Success motivation	0,56**	0,56**	0,45**	0,45**	0,37*	0,46**	0,34*	0,48**
Achievement motivation	-0,17	-0,13	-0,20	-0,04	-0,05	-0,07	-0,11	-0,07

Regarding relationship of motivational indicators with value orientations of the life spheres, the data describing the sample of the healthy students (Table 7) are almost similar to the obtained ones for the students with disabilities, excluding the values of some indicators. In the authors' opinion, it is quite natural as they live and study in the same society.

Table 7. Correlation between life sphere indexes and motivation of the healthy students

	Life spheres					
	Training	Education and a profession	Family	Social activity	Interests	Physical activity
Acquisition of knowledge	0,27*	0,35**	0,15	-0,02	0,17	0,03
Profession acquisition	0,35**	0,29**	0,07	0,24	0,26	0,03
Receiving of diploma	0,06	0,09	0,04	0,04	-0,01	0,19
Success motivation	0,42**	0,45**	0,42**	0,48**	0,49**	0,31*
Achievement motivation	-0,12	-0,08	-0,09	-0,12	-0,18	-0,11

Life purpose orientations of the healthy students as that of the students with disabilities are connected with the most motivational indicators (data presented in Table 8).

Thus, the “acquisition of knowledge” motive correlates strongly with the following life purpose orientations as “life purposes”, “life results”, “locus of control – life” and “overall meaningfulness of life”.

The “profession acquisition” motive correlates to a greater extent with the scales of “locus of control – self”, “locus of control – life” and “the overall index of meaningfulness of life”. The “receiving of diploma” motive is associated with “the overall index of meaningfulness of life”. Achievement motivation of the healthy students has also positive relationship with the “receiving of diploma” motive.

The performed evaluation demonstrates quite strong correlation between indexes of students' motivational sphere and indicators of the value-meaning unit.

Table 8. Correlation between life purpose orientations and motivation of the healthy students

	Life purposes	Life process	Life results	Locus of control - self	Locus of control - life	The overall index of meaningfulness of life	Achievement motivation
Acquisition of knowledge	0,56**	0,16*	0,31**	0,22**	0,40**	0,36**	-0,15
Profession acquisition	0,19*	0,23**	0,27**	0,31**	0,46**	0,44**	-0,22
Receiving of diploma	0,19*	0,33**	0,11	-0,14	0,29**	0,35**	0,33**
Success motivation	0,35**	0,33**	0,12	0,34**	0,42**	0,18*	0,14
Achievement motivation	-0,19	-0,16	-0,19*	-0,11	-0,05	-0,19*	1

It is known that the universal model of the regulatory process, in addition to the parts of goal-setting, programming, planning, also includes processes of result evaluation and

corrections, which are largely performed on the base of a personal level – personal qualities and characteristics, a person's system of expectations, aspirations and attitudes.

Conclusions

Analysis of the study results indicates the need to develop adequate assessment by students of their own life perspective during university training. Therefore, education shall be directed, in particular, onto addressing of such problems as development of initiative, responsibility, sense of time (timeliness), life's journey integrity, life perspective that allows students to be an active subject of professional and personal development, self-development and self-realization.

Studying of persons' life perspective, conscious ideas about the future shows that the most subjects can be described as motivated people who perceive their life processes as interesting, emotionally rich and full of meaning, and a spent part of their lives is productive and meaningful. However, future prospects are not always supported by beliefs in their capabilities, it is not always possible to observe a clear correlation of purposes with future, emotional intensity with the present, pleasure with the results, the past.

It was found out that temporal factors determine behavior in two ways. The first type defines behavior within a short period of time, in specific situations, activities, and the second one defines behavior regulation for a long time and is associated with planning by a person of targeted changes and self-development. This type is based on self-knowledge of mechanisms to capture own internal reserves for self-realization.

It was found out that personal resources are especially significant for healthy students as well as for students with disabilities, as they are a source of stability, on the one hand, and potential for development, on the other hand.

It was revealed that learning, specifics of communication in the integrated environment activate mind restructuring for the students with disabilities into the direction of a healthy person adapted to life, who seeks self-fulfilment, and helps to correct deformities in subjective picture of life's journey through the balance of retrospective and prospective elements, reconstruction of cause-target relationship between life events.

Professional future that a person imagines as potentially possible one performs functions of subjective regulation and affects life choices, actions and human activities, the vector of personal and professional development.

Given the overall formation of student values during education and training, one should promote the values of self-development to form educational environment of developing type.

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Summary

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The paper is devoted to studying of value and concept determinants of person's learning motivation. The aim of the paper is to identify impact of life perspective assessment by students on their learning motivation.

The paper analyzes life perspective indexes and life purpose orientations in sample students enrolled into an integrated learning environment. The integrated learning environment is regarded as a model of persons' value environment. The empirical study embraced 436 students with physical illnesses and disabilities and 355 healthy students, who are considered as "normal". Importance of study of academic motivation for university students trained in integrated groups also increases due to the increase of a part of young people with disabilities in universities.

A comparative analysis of the data on students with disabilities and healthy students was performed. Characteristics of interrelation between value and life purpose orientation indexes and students' academic motivation were researched. The analysis demonstrates quite distinct correlation between parameters of the students' motivational sphere and indicators of the value-concept block.

Studying of persons' life perspective, conscious ideas about the future shows that the most subjects can be described as motivated people who perceive their life processes as interesting, emotionally rich and full of meaning, and a spent part of their lives is productive and meaningful. However, future prospects are not always supported by beliefs in their capabilities, it is not always possible to observe a clear correlation of purposes with future, emotional intensity with the present, pleasure with the results, the past.

It was found out that temporal factors determine behavior in two ways. The first type defines behavior within a short period of time, in specific situations, activities, and the second one defines behavior regulation for a long time and is associated with planning by a person of targeted changes and self-development. This type is based on self-knowledge of mechanisms to capture own internal reserves for self-realization.

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Professional future that a person imagines as potentially possible one performs functions of subjective regulation and affects life choices, actions and human activities, the vector of personal and professional development.

Given the overall formation of student values during education and training, one should promote the values of self-development to form educational environment of developing type.