

## PSYRGGU 2020

### Psychology of Personality: Real and Virtual Context

# ATTITUDES ABOUT VOLUNTEERING IN EARLY ADULTHOOD

Olga V. Almazova (a), Nikolaj S. Priazhnikov (b), Svetlana M. Churbanova (c), Sergey V. Molchanov (d)\*

\*Corresponding author

(a) Faculty of Psychology, Lomonosov Moscow State University, Moscow, Russia

(b) Faculty of Psychology, Lomonosov Moscow State University, Moscow, Russia

(c) Faculty of Psychology, Lomonosov Moscow State University, Moscow, Russia

(d) Faculty of Psychology, Lomonosov Moscow State University, 125009, Mohovaya str., 11-9, Moscow, Russia,  
s-molch2001@mail.ru

### *Abstract*

Early adulthood is the period of practical self-determination in personal and professional spheres. Volunteering activity proposes wide opportunities for self-realization in culture of dignity. The state status of volunteering gained in Russia last years improved the possibilities for participation in community service. We observe the increasing quantity of members of volunteering activity in different forms of care activity. Increasing willingness to participate in different forms community service arouses interest in attitudes and motivation of participants. The subjects attitudes and relation to volunteering activity defines the quality of activity, self-acceptance and self-esteem. The study was aimed to investigate the attitudes and relation to volunteering in early adolescence. The data consists of 110 subjects with higher education, mostly women (89 women and 21 men). The original questionnaire focused of attitude to volunteering was used. The results showed some typical descriptions of volunteering activity and it's significance. Some differences in understanding of community service for participants with different experience in volunteering are described.

2357-1330 © 2020 Published by European Publisher.

**Keywords:** Attitudes, early adulthood, volunteering.



## 1. Introduction

The period of early adulthood (17-22 years old) is the period of active self-determination in basic spheres of life including the search of own place in society through interaction with social world. The self-determination in modern world is realized in contradictory conditions of social norms and values, significant social uncertain and huge informational flow (Karabanova, 2007; Martsinkovskaya, 2012). In modern professional and social relations people often are orientated on personal success, hedonism, material benefits and other individual values that focuses on own self with egoistic view. At the same time self-manifestation as helping, caring, showing kindness as the orientation on the other person is an important component of self-acceptance and self-understanding (Bandura, 2002; Bandura et al., 1996). Volunteering activity is a free and altruistic activity to help the needy. In that sense the volunteering activity can be the form of self-realisation as the helping and caring person. We can define volunteering activity as one of the forms of personal and even professional self-determination.

There are a lot of studies of volunteering activity in psychology. The studies are devoted to situational factors of decision-making in community service, personal features, social-psychological readiness, motivation and etc. (Olchman & Dzhordan, 1997). For example the motivation of volunteering activity can be very diverse: the desire to help the needy, acquaintance with new people, answer good to good, intention to struggle with the concrete subjectively important problem, desire to fulfil free time. At the same time adolescents often want to feel fun in volunteering activity and the decrease of fun can be the reason to reject from it (Lahteenmaa, 1999). The content of the feelings can be strong regulation of readiness to participate in volunteering activity. There is a correlation between psychological well-being and volunteer activity. Community service often attracts people with higher level of life satisfaction and happiness, self-esteem, feeling of life-control and physical healthy. At the same time volunteering activity itself stimulates higher level of psychological well-being (Thoits & Hewitt, 2001).

The participation in volunteering activity has a strong relation with moral development. One of the forms of volunteering activity is practice of community service. Community service is the voluntary activity that benefits the community. Community service has two directions in moral sphere. The first one is the fact that community service is regarded as the indicator of moral health of the society (Putman, 2000). The second idea is the proposal that involvement in community service facilitate moral development (Yanes & Yates, 1997). The volunteering prosocial activity influences on moral development in adolescence and youth (Molchanov, 2007, 2019).

The model developmental pathways to entry the community service included several components: internal factors such as personal features, sympathy and empathy including moral identity; external factors such as social influence of family, culture and society; opportunities for activity from institutions and relationships. Moral identity includes moral cognition with judgments and moral/civic attitudes and moral self with level of moral evaluation, exploration, salient ideas and commitments to ideals (Hart et al., 2006).

Many programs of moral education include different forms of community service. There are a lot of conditions of volunteering activity that increase the social, moral and personal outcomes of that activity. The freedom of choice to participate in community service without social conformism in the foundation the choice is very important. The ability to reflect the content and consequences of the volunteering activity, personal attitudes and feeling is also very important for moral development (Hart et al., 1998; Nucci, 2006).

So, the self-reflection seems to be an important factor of understanding community service and can influence on the desire to participate in it.

## **2. Problem Statement**

It is a difficult task to estimate the level of volunteering activity in modern Russia. For a long time there was no official status of volunteering activity on the level of federal laws and that limited the possibilities in that sphere. But the legal uncertainty didn't stop people from for self-realization in volunteering activity in community service, care activities, work in charity foundations activity. In May 1, 2018 the federal law about volunteering was passed. As the result the increasing level of interest to participate in volunteering activity is observed, especially among adolescence and youth. The investigation of Russian Public Opinion Research Center in 2018 demonstrated that more than a half of Russians know about the volunteering activity, notice the increasing quantity of community service members and estimate it as the significant positive activity. Different forms of analysis defines that from 2 to 3 billion of Russian citizens participate in volunteering activity at least situational. The complicated and dramatic events such as technologic or biologic emergencies leads to extension of sample of people that are ready to volunteering activity. The last example is continuing coronavirus epidemic in Russia and all over the world. The development of technologies also developed the digital volunteering activities (Basheva & Ermolaeva, 2020). Different forms of volunteering activity appears in nowadays life in Russia.

In that work we studied the volunteers relation to their activity and their attitudes to it. As we already mentioned the volunteers attitudes influence of effectiveness of his activity. We can define 3 level of activity development. On the first step all attention is focused on the improvement of the quality of activity (ontologies stage). On the second level the person is orientated on methods and ways of needy (epistemology stage). The third level of activity development more attention is devoted to the subject of activity- the volunteer himself (methodology level) (Yudin, 1978; Zinchenko & Smirnov, 1983) The volunteering activity is important not only for needy but for volunteers themselves. The volunteers attitudes and relation to activity defines the quality of his activity and evaluation of community service as socially significant and individually important with increasing self-esteem. That activity can be regarded as realization of culture of dignity with deep means and internal feeling of virtue (Asmolov, 2017).

## **3. Research Questions**

**3.1** What are the attitudes about volunteering activity in early adulthood?

**3.2** What are the goals of volunteering activity in early adulthood?

## **4. Purpose of the Study**

Volunteering activity as the fast developing sphere of self-realisation in Russia arouses interest in different social and ethnical groups with inlarge of it's members. The study was aimed to investigate the attitudes and relation to volunteering activity in most active group of potential volunteers: early adolescence.

## 5. Research Methods

The data consists of 110 subjects with higher education, mostly women (89 women and 21 men). The original questionnaire focused on attitudes to volunteering activity was used. The investigation was realized in written form individually with volunteers with discussion after the questionnaire was fulfilled.

## 6. Findings

We analyzed the peculiarities of volunteering attitudes. The distribution of sample with different experience of volunteering activity is the following: 46,8% had the volunteering experience and 53,2% didn't have that experience. The readiness to participate in volunteering activity varies in very wide range from 0 to 100% (Me=57,78; SD=22,89). The analysis of attitudes towards volunteering activity defined some universal (shared more than 75% of sample) attitudes towards volunteering. The results are present in Table 1.

**Table 01. Universal attitudes about volunteering in early adulthood**

Question	Yes	No
Can volunteering activity be realized without organization?	74,9 %	25,1 %
Do the countries with strong social policy needs social volunteering activity?	84,7 %	15,3 %
Can volunteering activity help in the professional self-determination process?	77,3 %	22,7 %
Do the volunteers needs special professional preparation?	61,1 %	38,9 %
Can professional people be partly a volunteers?	76,1 %	23,9 %

We can define some universal attitudes for volunteering activity: countries with strong social policy still need volunteering activity that can be realised without organization, professional people can be partly the volunteers and volunteering activity can helping professional self-determination. The necessity for professional preparation doesn't seem obvious for majority. The professional preparation is regarded as short-time process. The comparing analyses of span charts for indicated questions shows differences in dispersion. The dispersion is significantly under for: agreement that countries with strong social policy needs social volunteering activity (U=452,0; p=0,004), possibility for professionals to be partly volunteers (U=98,0; p=0,000), near to significant possibility to be realised without organization (U=923,0; p=0,106).

The defined criteria of volunteering activity are the freedom of the choice (34.2%), activity focus (31,6%), no salary (12,6%) and specific motivation (9%). 12,6% of the sample don't see the difference between volunteering activity and social work. The volunteering activity can be focused on care and emotional support of older people (39,6%), care and emotional support of ill people in hospitals and hospices (30,9%), work in orphanage (13,5%), care of people in trouble circumstances (11,7%), poor (7,2%), work on big events (7,2%), in animals shelters (5,4%). Interesting that 10,8% of the sample doesn't know where the volunteers can be useful. Interesting that students in the discussion after filling questionnaire discussed that professional and government organizations can be more effective in some forms of volunteering activity. At the same time many forms of students community service able in the university activities were not named.

We analysed differences in volunteering attitudes between subject's with and without the experience. The experience of volunteering activity influences on readiness to participate in community service activity

in future: the previous experience increases the level of willingness to participate in volunteering (U=872,0; p=0,000, Mann-Whitney criteria for independent samples). The immersion in the activity seems to correlate with understanding of its usefulness. Adults with experience of professional preparation before the volunteering activity estimate it as more important and useful than subjects without that experience (U=1107,5; p=0,023).

The correlation analyses help to define the link between different attitudes about volunteering activity. The results are present in Table 2.

**Table 02. Correlation analyses of attitudes about volunteering activity.**

	<b>Volunteering without organization</b>	<b>Confidence in efficiency of volunteering</b>	<b>Volunteering in countries with strong social policy</b>	<b>Forms of volunteering</b>	<b>Volunteering as professional self-determination</b>	<b>Professional preparation in volunteering.</b>
Volunteering without organization	1 .	,303 ,001	,262 ,006			,267 ,008
Confidence in efficiency of volunteering		1 .	,253 ,008	,207 ,038	,347 ,000	,374 ,000
Volunteering in Countries with strong social policy			1 .		,326 ,001	,386 ,000
Forms of volunteering				1 .	,351 ,000	,287 ,006
Volunteering as prof.self-determination					1 .	,487 ,000
Professional preparation in volunteering						1 .

Most of the attitudes about volunteering activity has correlation. It can be explained by the systematic interrelated understanding of foundation of volunteering activity. The understanding of possibility and efficiency of volunteering activity is accompanied with own experience and understand the role of short-term professional preparation. Vice versa the negative attitudes towards volunteering activity spreads on most questions: no differences in various questions were found. At the same time content analysis shows some ambivalence in esteem of volunteering activity.

## 7. Conclusion

The results revealed basic goals of volunteering activity: care and emotional support of people: children without parents, old or ill, with trouble circumstances and poor. Some forms of volunteering activities were not named. The orientation on work with terrorism victims, victims of nature of technological disasters, care about wild nature or ecological problems weren't revealed. About 10% of the sample doesn't know the spheres for volunteering activity. Some universal attitudes for volunteering were found: countries with strong social policy still need volunteering that can be realised without organization, professional people can be partly the volunteers and volunteering activity can helping professional self-

determination. The confidence in efficiency and necessity of volunteering is higher among people with volunteering experience. The reviewed results showed the ambivalence of attitudes about volunteering among early adults in Russia. On the one hand we see the confidence in efficiency of volunteering, understanding of goals and forms of realisation, readiness to self-realisation without the support of government. But on the other hand there is a narrow vision of volunteering mission, excluding many important fields of helping behaviour, no vision of necessity of professional preparation. Interesting that 10% of subjects voluntary took part in investigation showed no goals of volunteering activity in modern Russia. The ambivalence of attitude about volunteering in Russia can be defined by the only recent changes in it's official status, deficit of social advertising policy to participate in organized structures, uncertainty in future life and professional perspective, priority of individual and hedonistic values on individual level.

## Acknowledgments

This research was funded by Russian Foundation for Basic Research under the project 20-013-00439.

## References

- Asmolov, A. G. (2017). *Psihologia lichnosti* [Psychology of personality]. Smisl Publisher.
- Bandura, A. (2002). Selective moral disengagement in the exercise of moral agency. *Journal of Moral Education, 31*, 101-119.
- Bandura, A., Barbaranelli, C., Caprara, G., & Pastorelli, C. (1996). Mechanisms of moral disengagement in the exercis of moral agency. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 71*, 364-374.
- Basheva, O. A., & Ermolaeva, P. O. (2020). The phenomenon of digital volunteering in emergency: nature, types, theoretical frameworks. *Vestnik instituta sociologii, 11*, 47-69.
- Hart, D., Atkins, R. & Donnelly T.M. (2006). Community service and moral development. In M. Killen, & J. Smetana (Eds.), *Handbook of moral development* (pp. 633-657). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Hart, D., Atkins, R., & Ford, D. (1998). Urban America as a context for the development of moral identity in adolescence. *Journal of Social Issues, 54*, 513-530.
- Karabanova, O. A. (2007). Ponyatie «sotsial'naya situatsiya razvitiya» v sovremennoi psikhologii [Term "social situation of development" in modern psychology]. *Metodologiya i istoriya psikhologii* [Methodology and History of Psychology], *4*, 40-56.
- Lahteenmaa, J. (1999) The hedonistic altruism of young voluntary workers. *Young, 7*, 18.
- Martsinkovskaya, T. D. (2012). Informatsionnaya sotsializatsiya v izmenyayushchemsya informatsionnom prostranstve [Information socialization in changing informational space]. *Psikhologicheskie issledovaniya* [Psychological investigations], *5*(26), 7. <http://psystudy.ru/num/2012v5n26/766-martsinkovskaya26.html>
- Molchanov, S. V. (2007). Moral'no-tsennostnye orientatsii kak funktsiya sotsial'noi situatsii razvitiya [Moral-value orientation as the function of social situation of development]. *Kul'turno-istoricheskaya psikhologiya* [Cultural-Historical Psychology], *1*, 73—79.
- Molchanov, S. V. (2019). Moralnoe samoopravdanie kak mif moralnoi svobodi lichnosti [Moral justification as myth of moral freedom of personality]. *Natsional'nyi psikhologicheskii zhurnal* [National Psychological Journal], *3*(35), 60—70
- Nucci, L. (2006) Education for moral development In M. Killen, & J. Smetana (Eds.), *Handbook of moral development* (pp. 657-681). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Olchman, M., & Dzordan, P. (1997) *Volunteers are a valuable source*. The Johns Hopkins University. [http://gov.cap.ru/SiteMap.aspx?gov\\_id=82&id=639809](http://gov.cap.ru/SiteMap.aspx?gov_id=82&id=639809)
- Putman, R. (2000) *Bowling along in America: The collapse and revival of American community*. Simon and Schuster.

- Thoits, L. A., T., & Hewitt, B. N. (2001). Volunteer Work and Well-Being. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 42, 115–131.
- Yanes, M., & Yates, M. (1997) *Roots for civic identity: international perspectives on community service and activism in youth*. Cambridge University Press.
- Yudin, E. G. (1978). *Sistemnyi podkhod i printsip deyatel'nosti* [System approach and principle of activity]. Nauka Publisher.
- Zinchenko, V. P., & Smirnov, S. D. (1983). *Metodologicheskie voprosy psihologii* [Methodological issues of psychology]. MGU Publisher.