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**PREDICTORS OF EDUCATIONAL, HOBBY-RELATED AND  
VOLUNTEER ACTIVITY OF STUDENTS**

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*Abstract*

Educational, developmental, hobby-related, communicative and volunteer activities are traditional for student communities. The relevance of the study of predictors for various forms of social activity of students is related to the need for their inclusion in the community and the development of initiative and creativity.

The purpose of this study is to study the ways of expression and predictors of the educational, developmental, hobby-related, communicative and volunteer activities of students.

Students from universities of Saratov region took part in the study. The total number of participants was 400 people (38% of them were men).

In the study we used the test of social-psychological adjustment (SPA) by Diamond (TSPAD); the scale of basic needs satisfaction (SBNS) by Johnston & Finney; the scales of activity expressiveness developed by the author of the study.

Educational, developmental, hobby-related, and communicative activities occupy equally leading positions in the behavior of university students, unlike volunteer activity, which is much less expressed. It is shown that 21% of the variations in educational and developmental activity, 11% of variations of volunteer and 2% of hobby-related and communicative activity are explained by personal characteristics that are of primary importance for students' adaptation. The basic need for competence determines variations in the sphere of educational and developmental (12%), hobby-related and communicative activities (8%).

The assumption is made about the significant determination of students' social activity by social skills and social intelligence.

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**Keywords:** Personality, social activity of students.



## 1. Introduction

Educational, developmental, hobby-related, and communicative activities are important forms of students' social activity. However, the intensity of these types of activity varies considerably depending on a number of circumstances. It is believed that these types of activity pursue different goals and are based on different needs and moreover, sometimes contradict each other, e.g. by creating time deficit, shortage of intellectual and other resources for the implementation of any of these types of activity. Therefore, it is important to define the determinants of these forms of student activity and their possible interrelations. It is quite obvious that by gaining experience of social activity in these forms, students can apply these skills in a wide range of social objects, including civil and social initiatives that influence innovative processes in the society, its socio-political and socio-economic development.

Modern studies of students' social activity cover various aspects of this phenomenon. Scientists point out an important role of students' activity in their future social and professional life (Dombrovskis, Guseva, & Capulis 2014; Shamionov, 2017).

The most important sign of social activity is the inclusion of an individual and groups into social interaction (Abulhanova-Slavskaja, 1999) and socially-approved activities (Shamionov & Grigoryeva, 2012).

Studies of the students' social activity over the recent decades have been centered around the problem of its definition and operationalization (Shamionov, 2012), setting its levels (Eremina, 2015), forms (Shamionov, 2012), risks (Shamionov & Grigoryeva, 2012), adaptation in the social environment [9], motivational mechanisms (Zabolotsky, 2015). Many studies cover specific forms or manifestations of social activity, analyzing their frequency, relevance and significance for the society. Thus, scientist study social activity of student associations (Yunosheva, 2010), levels of social activity in socially transforming activities (Eremina, 2015), activity as an element of social self-determination (Avakyan, 2012) Bocharova, 2017), altruistic social activity (Voronina, 2009), influence of student volunteering and participation in political agitation on their political awareness (Roker, Player & Coleman, 2010), etc.

A number of works has been devoted to the analysis of socio-psychological determinants of social activity. In particular, some research has been done on the attitude to social activity in relation to subject characteristics, individual adaptation (Shamionov & Grigoryeva, 2012) depending on the type of activity being realized, through organized social activity (Oosterhoff, Ferris, & Metzger, 2017), socio-demographic determinants of social activity (Roker, Player & Coleman, 2010), social trust of the youth as a factor of social activity (Yeshpanova, Narbekova, Biyekenova, Kuchinskaya, & Mukanova, 2014).

An important aspect of student activity in the sphere of education, hobby-related and volunteer work are the university traditions, among which are the festivals, volunteer forums and other events. Scientists point out that traditions are a significant factor of students' social activity, which promote their initiatives aimed at participation in educational, hobby-related and volunteer activities (Voronina, 2009; Avakyan, 2012). There are studies on stimulating student social activity in the educational and developmental sphere, as well as in organization of leisure and volunteer work (Kumykov, Lyuev, Zhabelova, & Zhuravel, 2017; Azizov, 2013; Myagkova, 2012; Savchenko, 2014, Statkevich, 2013), which allow to achieve a more significant result in students' integration into the university educational system and gain experience in social activity. It should also be noted that researchers consider these types

of activities as the means of developing general social activity of students, and as a way to develop initiative, leadership and social responsibility (Rumina, 2013; Shamionov & Grigoryeva, 2012; Hanmurzina, 2013).

## **2. Problem Statement**

Despite the considerable interest of researchers in the leading forms of students' social activity in the academic conditions at higher educational institutions (universities and colleges), the problem of determination of widespread educational, developmental, hobby-related, communicative and volunteer activities remains under-investigated. This knowledge will allow optimizing students' inclusion into various activities and will contribute to the formation of their initiative, social creativity and leadership.

## **3. Research Questions**

What part of the variations of educational, developmental, hobby-related, communicative and volunteer activities is conditioned by characteristics of individual social and psychological adaptation?

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

The purpose of the study is to investigate the expressiveness and predictors of educational, developmental, hobby-related, communicative and volunteer activities as forms of students' social activity.

## **5. Research Methods**

The paradigm of the study. This study is conducted on the basis of methodology of system and diachronic approach in psychology. According to the purpose and the main approach, the study is realized with use of comparison method, regression and correlation analysis.

### **5.1. Research group**

Students from universities of Saratov region took part in the study. The total number of participants was 400 people (38% of them were men).

### **5.2. Research methods and techniques**

We used the test of social-psychological adjustment (SPA) by C. Rogers-R. Diamond (TSPAD), adapted into the Russian language by Snegireva (Rajgorodskij, 1998); the SBNS scale (the scale of basic needs satisfaction) by Johnston & Finney (2010); the scales of activity expressiveness developed by the author of the study.

SPA (101 points) consists of 6 integral scales (maximum grade – 100): adaptation (68 points), self-acceptance (18 points), acceptance of others (13 points), emotional comfort (14 points), internality (22 points), striving for domination (9 points). The scale of lies (9 points) and escapism (5 points) are given

additionally. The participants assess statements in accordance with 8-point grading scale (0 – it absolutely does not refer to me, 7 – it is exactly about me).

SBNS (21 points) consists of 3 scales, i.e. autonomy (7 points), competence (6 points) and relation to others (8 points). The participants are asked to mark one of the numbers 1 to 7 in the answer sheet in accordance with three response levels: Not at all true, Somewhat true, Very true.

The indicators of social activity preferences were identified with the help of specially designed scales allocated on the basis of pilot research project. The scales consist of 10 units, where 1 means that the sign is not expressed, 10 means that the sign is expressed to the maximum extent. Three features are singled out: educational and developmental activity, hobby-related and communicative activity, volunteer activity.

### 5.3. Statistical analysis

To implement the goal, we used the methods of primary statistics, cluster (method of intra-group relationships) and regression (direct step-by-step method) analysis. All statistical analyses were conducted with the aid of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS 22.0).

## 6. Findings

Let us view the results of the study of expressiveness of educational, developmental, hobby-related and volunteer activities as forms of students' social activity. The indicators of expressiveness of these types of activity testify to higher level of hobby-related student activity ( $8.52 \pm 1.80$  against educational activity  $7.02 \pm 2.49$  and volunteer activity  $1.96 \pm 2.24$ ). This means that there is a more serious initiative-filled attitude to organizing one's leisure time and education, than volunteer activity, which is secondary for students. It might seem that hobby-related activity, similarly to volunteering activity, is secondary to educational activity, but it is more intensely expressed than students' major activity, which is educational one. Moreover, SD indicators demonstrate unanimity of respondents. This fact debunks a myth about Russian students' major interest in volunteer activity and the insignificant role of hobby-related and communicative activity. Alongside with this, correlation analysis shows that hobby-related ( $r=0.303$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) and volunteer (altruistic) ( $r=0.181$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) activities are related to educational activity. In other words, educational activity is central, all other types of students' activity boil down to it, no matter how well they are expressed.

Let us turn our attention to the results of the study of the predictors of these types of activity. Our dependable variables are the expressiveness of activity in educational, hobby-related and volunteer spheres. The independent variables are indicators of students' socio-psychological adaptation and their basic needs.

**Table 01.** Predictors of educational and developmental activity

Column Heading	$\Delta R^2$	Non-standardized coefficients B	SD	Standardized coefficients Beta	t	p
(Constant)		4.39	1.29		3.40	0.001
Emotional comfort	0.16	0.02	0.01	0.161	1.73	0.090
Acceptance of others	0.03	0.04	0.01	0.212	2.87	0.005
Escapism	0.02	-0.09	0.04	-0.213	-2.51	0.013

$R^2=0,21$ ;  $F=16.89$ , 0.001

In the first case we got the results that project determination of activity via characteristics of socio-psychological adaptation. Table 1 shows that the most important predictor of educational and developmental activity is emotional comfort, which describes 16% of its variations. Acceptance of others positively determines this type of activity, while escapism undermines it. This means that the high level of personal social connections with others, positive attitude to them, promotes the emergence of educational activity, desire for self-development through participation in educational and developmental activity, as well as a tendency to solve any problems that might emerge. These variables define 21 % of dispersion for the educational and developmental activity. Previously conducted studies (Shamionov, 2014) show that emotional comfort of high school children from secondary school and first-year students of universities is an important foundation for their successful academic adaptation at university and further academic success. In other words, educational activity is conditioned by, on the one hand, personal subjective well-being, and on the other hand, acceptance of difficulties and a tendency to overcome them, rather than trying to ignore them.

Hobby-related and communicative activity is insignificantly determined by the characteristic “acceptance of others” ( $R^2=0.02$ ,  $F=4.33$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). It is obvious that acceptance of others and friendly attitude towards them are necessary for the implementation of this form of activity, as it presupposes communication and spending time together with others. On the other hand, students' hobby-related and communicative activity is less determined by personal characteristics, which are significant for its socio-psychological adaptation. This could be possibly related to the fact that social skills are more important for its realization. Previously it has been found out that the predictor of hobby-related and communicative activity is worldly personal orientation ( $R^2=0.09$ ,  $F=18.33$ ,  $p<0.01$ ), which includes communicativeness, social status, love of life, and comfort (Shamionov & Grigoryeva, 2012).

**Table 02.** Predictor of volunteer activity

Predictors	$\Delta R^2$	Non-standardized coefficients B	SD	Standardized coefficients Beta	t	p
(Constant)		5.57	0.95		5.89	0.001
Self-acceptance	0.03	-0.07	0.02	-0.47	-3.96	0.001
Emotional comfort	0.06	0.06	0.01	0.45	3.77	0.001
Desire to dominate	0.02	-0.03	0.01	-0.16	-2.06	0.040

$R^2=0.11$ ;  $F=7.63$ , 0.001

Finally, volunteer activity is positively determined by emotional comfort and negatively determined by self-acceptance and desire to dominate (Table 2). This data shows that emotional comfort due to positive feelings and subjective well-being can aid helping others. At the same time, desire to dominate in interpersonal relations, tendency to suppress others do not promote the manifestation of this form of activity, similarly to self-acceptance and egocentric personal position.

Introduction to the regression equation of indicators of basic needs (autonomy, competence and connectedness) made it possible to reveal a very remarkable picture. In particular, variations in the expressiveness of the educational and developmental activity of students are due to the need for competence ( $R^2=0.12$ ,  $F=19.48$ ,  $p<0.001$ ), which is not surprising, since the basic need for cognition and

mastering new skills contribute to the realization of the educational needs of the individual. Together with this, the revealed perdition of hobby-related activity of this variable ( $R^2=0.08$ ,  $F=11.49$ ,  $p<0.001$ ), testifies to high significance of hobby-related activity for satisfaction of the basic need for students' competence. This means that these two different and very often opposed to each other types of activity are conditioned by the manifestation of the same basic need. It is quite unexpected to observe the lack of prediction and simple correlation of volunteer activity and the need for relations with other people. Possibly, this is happening because against the common opinion, volunteering is not conditioned by this need and is characterized by other motives. The obtained data corresponds with the results of studies that have been conducted previously (Sharkovskaya, 2016); they show that socio-cultural hobby-related activity of students is based on cognitive motivation. Apart from this, students' hobby-related activity acts as an integral part of their extra-curricular activity, however, intellectually and cognitively they are always interrelated, as it is realized within the framework of student unions, student clubs, etc.

Based on the obtained results we can suppose that the most significant factors of students' social activity are characteristics of social intellect and interrelated social skills of the students, which allow them to unveil their individual potential to a greater extent in the course of their inclusion into various communities and realization of activity. The next step should contain structured modeling with the supposition regarding directions of connections, personal characteristics as mediators and moderators of social activity of students.

## 7. Conclusion

The study, that has been carried out brings us to the following conclusions:

Educational, developmental, and hobby-related activities take similar leading positions in university students' behavior, unlike less well expressed volunteer activity. However, the central position is taken by educational and developmental activity, to which hobby-related and volunteer activities are related.

Various forms of social activity of students are differently determined by characteristics of socio-psychological adaptation: 21% variations of educational and developmental activity (emotional comfort, acceptance of others, escapism), 11% variations of volunteer (self-acceptance, emotional comfort, desire to dominate) and 2% of hobby-related and communicative activity (acceptance of others) are explained by these characteristics.

The basic need for competence conditions variations of educational and developmental, hobby-related and communicative activity, which testifies to common nature of these types of student activity.

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