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**RETROSPECTIVE ANALYSIS OF STUDENT PERSONALITY  
DEVELOPMENT ESTIMATION PROGRAMS IN SOVIET  
SCHOOLS**

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*Abstract*

The article analyzes theoretical and practical developments of Russian Soviet scientists, and the creation of universal technological programs for the formation of a child's personality, the formation of individual psychological and social qualities of a person in the process of teaching in Soviet Russia schools, as well as the study of cognitive mechanisms that mediate the behavior of Soviet schoolchildren. The paper gives concrete examples of how Soviet science, following the decrees of the Party, planned to form and educate the students' international solidarity and intolerance to human oppression and other behavioral characteristics. In addition, the reader is invited to consider selective pedagogical and psychological ideas associated with options for assessing the overall personality development of a child in the system of socio-cultural educational space in educational institutions of Soviet Russia. The paper analyzes a retrospective search for a solution to the problem of choosing methods for assessing the overall personality level of a student's development. The authors present the results of the research, which indicate that the scientific achievements of teachers and psychologists of Soviet Russia are unique and require a revision of their value in the modern world.

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**Keywords:** Personality, evaluation, socio-cultural education space, development, schoolboy, educational institution.



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## 1. Introduction

Modern society increasingly seeks for in-depth answers to the questions of what the younger generation must be, what experiences of the previous years could be successfully applied in modern education, what activities that are actual to our time should be stated as wrong and excluded from the tendencies of a child's personality development. Certainly, all the above mentioned problems make sense only in one case, provided that the search of their solution is carried out systematically, relying on the historical experience and peculiarities of educational spaces of modern educational institutions.

The ideas on what people, who lived and built a Soviet state, should be, were discussed at various political levels and targeted events. Thus, in the program of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in the pre-war years, the task was "to form a new man, in which spiritual wealth, moral purity and physical perfection are harmoniously combined" (Shevchenko, 1967, p. 3). At the same time, the role of social conditions and upbringing was emphasized in the formation of the individual, thus, attention was focused on its social essence.

The ideas of Russian scientists, such as I.M. Sechenov, implying that "a human being is not mere an organism, but a social phenomenon", and V.M. Bechterev - "a person is a product of the society", "the public environment creates a personality" (Bechterev, 1905, p. 97), and of other social scientists, declared at the beginning of the 20th century, acquired an applied sense in the Soviet science. The political orientation of the state determined the specifics of its educational sphere. Thus, the questions about the influence of the educational institution on the upbringing of the student or even his own family had been often raised. The Party determined what kind of ideals the Soviet people must meet. Proceeding from the assertion that "the social environment creates personality", the Party, as a politicized body for managing development by the country, posed the task of educating the "Soviet man» to pedagogy. However, the task, obviously, was not solved only by pedagogical (methodical) means, but more and more clearly pointed to the problem of the approach of education to the age-specific individual characteristics of the personality and its development.

## 2. Problem Statement

Due to the fact that Russian and world modern sociological and psychological science is looking for new opportunities to influence the qualitative personal characteristics of young people, the authors analyse and model the experience of Soviet psychological science on the formation and development of a student's personality, the impact on behavioural characteristics of a child and the experience of introducing a variety of psychological software technologies into practice focused on the goals that the Communist Party of Soviet Russia pointed out.

## 3. Research Questions

The questions of this research are as follows:

- What is the "process of development and formation of the learner's personality"?
- What factors (external and internal) in the opinion of scientists of Soviet Russia influenced the development of the personality of the child?

- What ways did Soviet science and the state plan to apply in order to influence the process of shaping the child's personality?
- How was the assessment of the formation of the child's personality traits carried out?

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

The purpose of the study is to analyse the experience of Soviet scientists in creating universal software technologies for the formation of the student personality in schools, the development of the child in the direction that will be determined by state policy.

#### **5. Research Methods**

The main research methods are:

- Archival research (for working with materials of historical value).
- Information analysis (for studying general and particular trends of the problem).
- Retrospective modelling (for restoring the ideological views of politics and science in Soviet Russia).
- Summarizing the information received (for structuring of obtained research results).

#### **6. Findings**

It should be noted that the concept of "personal development" in different periods of the 20th century was filled with different meanings. Thus, P.D. Shevchenko comes to the conclusion that "the child's natural possibilities are realized in the course of his life under the influence of education and upbringing" (Shevchenko, 1967, p. 49). G.A. Fortunatov, A.S. Arkin, M.Ya. Basov, L.V. Zankov, P.O. Efrussi, L.S. Vygotsky, and others, considered children's collectives to be crucial to the development of an individual. A.V. Vladimirsky wrote that "collective education does not exclude an individual approach" (Vladimirsky, 1927, p. 56). Thus, the problem of meaningful and functional "ordering" of the child's personality development process more and more affected the minds of scientists, theoreticians and practitioners of Soviet Russia.

One should note that the term "sociocultural educational space" at that time did not exist in the science and practice of the Soviet period, but the meaningful description was very close to its modern interpretation. Therefore, one should clarify that in the context under consideration the authors most closely defined the definition of the sociocultural educational space of educational institutions, which was given by the contemporary educator L.P. Rusinova. By its definition, the sociocultural educational space is "... a place in the society where the set of relations and connections is subjectively set, where special activities of various systems (state, public and mixed) are carried out to develop the individual and his socialization" (Rusinova, 2010). Relying on this definition, one must note that in the time period that the authors are considering, the main vector of the movement of the educational space of educational institutions in Soviet Russia, reflecting the idea of subjective set of relations and links in the development of the individual and his socialization, was built on the basis of the political development of society.

The thought described in the works of the greatest Soviet teacher A.S. Makarenko to create a “program of the human person” sounds innovative for Soviet times. L.I. Bozhovich, referring to A.S. Makarenko’s works, notes that he “... demanded that the goals of education be formulated specifically so that they include an accurate and clear exposition of the program of the human personality”, “human character”, and those specific pedagogical tasks that must be solved when implementing the “program” (Bozhovich, 1966, pp.18-19]. Indeed, the task of creating a “method of conscious management of a child development”, “designing” a human person in accordance with the requirements of the society, but with the support of its own activity, is a deep problem that arose at the junction of two large-scale phenomena, namely, psycho-physiological personal development and social and cultural development of the society.

Summing up the results of the question concerning the evaluation and development of the child’s personal qualities, the individualization of his behaviour, cognitive features, age-specific features of the psyche and, ultimately, consciousness, one must note that various suggestions were made by scientists on how to evaluate the child’s development. At the same time, the existing assessment and diagnostic systems were very modest, and affected the development of the personality and behavioural characteristics of the child, mainly in the system of education. Although the idea of the psychological foundations of this process can be seen clearly in their writings. “In other words, when it becomes necessary to dismember a single educational process and to single out specific educational goals in it, then the “unit” of such dismemberment should not be, apparently, the quality of the individual, especially certain skills and abilities, but certain forms of behaviour, the actions of the child, the peculiarities of his attitude toward reality, in which many qualities of the child’s personality, his needs and aspirations are interconnected” (Bozhovich, 1966, p. 30).

The attempt of the technological approach to the formation of the child’s personal qualities in the theory of L.I. Bozhovich is important for modern psychological science. He cites the most relevant task for the time, for example, “... if ... the society has set the task of educating the growing generation of hatred for the exploitation of man by man, international solidarity, an intolerant attitude to all oppression and discrimination, then what are the features of behaviour and activity, what feelings and experiences, what system of relations to reality and what ideas and concepts one should educate in children of preschool age, in younger schoolchildren, teenagers, so that you can confidently say that the upbringing of the younger generation is carried out consistently in the direction that was assigned to him from the very beginning” (Bozhovich, 1966, p. 25). Obviously, in this context the authors are talking about the age characteristics of the child, which should be taken into account already in the applied field of pedagogy. Polish teachers Z. Krzysztoszek and H. Svid, mentioned by L.I. Bozhovich, tried to develop such idea. It should be noted that the views of foreign colleagues were similar to those of Soviet teachers, and attempts to solve similar educational problems in the educational system of Poland were of interest to Soviet society. So, L.I. Bozhovich, clarifying the idea of Z. Krzysztoszek and H. Svid, points out that the task of educating students of international solidarity and intolerance for human oppression can be solved through a system of educational goals that take into account the age-specific characteristics of the individual. So, for the first time, it is proposed to educate the child to notice situations in which his comrade is offended, when those around him ridicule physical defects, and at the same time form a habit of protecting the weak. Further, the next step in cognitive experience is the idea of accustoming schoolchildren to noticing

the mood of others, and to reckoning with them. The next stage is connected with the education of sympathy not only for others, but also for people with whom they do not meet directly, with the ability to experience their grief, i.e., in fact, there is a formation of conscious empathy skills. And only after this, it is possible to move on to the tasks of political education, the formation of hatred for the exploitation of man by man, international solidarity.

Analyzing this approach, L.I. Bozhovich notes his undoubted positive substantive essence. Although he does not exclude in it the presence of controversial points: the issues of the influence of interpersonal relations, the adequate mechanism and process of transferring the system of feelings and experiences from one object to another, the use of the emotional-moral experience of the child in another plane (Bozhovich, 1968, pp. 157-300).

In Soviet Russia, the problem of taking into account the evaluation and changes in the qualities of a child's personality is considered in a meaningful sense as a set of psychological phenomena, "... we are talking about the level of development in children of their moral consciousness, behaviour, moral feelings, the features of the formation of interests, experiences, etc." (Bozhovich, 1966, p. 46). However, this problem is presented as a pedagogical phenomenon – studying the level of pupils' upbringing, i.e., "taking into account the results of the educational work" of the school aimed at the child or the whole team.

The peculiarities of the development of the moral feelings of the child, their formation and upbringing were studied by A.P. Nechayev. He continued his scientific research in Soviet Russia, but expanded the scientific field, probably at the urge of the actual time of power, to work on "... the psychological characteristics of students in military schools, the mental development of Red Army soldiers and the organization of library work in the army", "... in the development of the psychological side of the rescue service in mines", the conduct of "... experimental psychological studies of pilots, etc." (Nikolskaya & Nechayev, 1997, p. 100).

Let us note that in the psychological and pedagogical science of the 20th century, the question of studying the "level of education of pupils" was extremely complex and ambiguous. In general, the question of measuring the properties of the child's personality by psychological and pedagogical methods was raised in Russia by individual scientists as early as the end of the 19th century (A.P. Nechaev, N.E. Rummyantsev, G.I. Rossolimo, etc.) (Karpova, 2006, p. 1). As a result, the Soviet school assessed the level of the pupil's upbringing following the results of his success in teaching and exemplary behaviour. One should note that in the sources of that time, one can find references to the use of the results of the test and psychological research of European and American psychology (Blumer, 1937). Despite the fact, that psychological methods of research abroad were actively used in various areas of psychological science (Rosenberg, 1965), Soviet psychological science was not guided by them. However, according to L.I. Bozhovich, in connection with the "empirical nature" of the tests, the inability to disclose "the structure of the development process", Soviet science and the school did not use them, although they approved the idea of obtaining information about personality changes, but in another meaningful sense. Later, both in Russia and abroad, the test, as a method of measuring the qualities and properties of the child's personality, had only a local application, i.e., there was no group of tests, or their sequence, that would

solve any system task and would reflect the significant results of any educational programs implemented in practice.

In Soviet Russia, attempts were made to formulate provisions for programs to develop the personality of the schoolchild, but they were aimed solely at educational tasks determined by the political ideals of society and the state. However, the key ideas of this technological approach, correlating with the basics of cognitive behavioural direction, could be relevant to modern society. Separate aspects of the considered program approach can be found in the works of both modern Russian scientists (Slobodskaya, 2017, p. 123) and their foreign colleagues (Jorge, 1984; Birnbacher, 1984; Rother et al., 2011; Marjoribanks, 2002).

## 7. Conclusion

The analysis of the materials allowed one to come to the following final conclusion: practice, both school and parental need concrete assistance in questions of development of the child's personality, in education of certain qualities. However, there was no systematic approach to the solution of the question of assessing and developing the personality of the schoolchild.

Despite the fact that following the idea of A.S. Makarenko on the development of the "Program of the Human Personality" many Soviet pedagogues rushed, the authors came to the conclusion that the implementation of this plan was hampered by the politicization of the processes of education and upbringing. However, in the authors' opinion, the most outstanding Russian woman teacher L.I. Bozhovich came closest to formulating the problem and structuring her main blocks. It is her views on the process of development and formation of the child's personality that are closest to the positions of modern scientists and practitioners. Her thoughts, presented on a large scale in the works on pedagogical psychology, have not lost their relevance today, and the questions she raised in the middle of the 20th century, only now find their own solution.

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