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Personality in Norm and in Pathology 2021**MORAL AND EMOTIONAL CHARACTERISTICS OF STUDENTS  
WITH DIFFERENT ATTITUDES TO VOLUNTEERING**

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**Abstract**

Currently, it is important to involve youth in the social practice of volunteering to develop necessary personal qualities for their social and psychological adaptation. The aim is to study the moral and emotional characteristics of the initial university students-volunteers in the specialty "educational psychologist". 294 students from 17 to 29 years were studied. Projective technique "The Friend-Adviser" by Veselova to study taking decision in situations of moral choice and "The Prosocial Tendencies Measure" (PTM) by Carlo and Randall in adaptation of Kukhtova to study the types of prosocial behavior were used to assess the moral sphere, "Emotional Empathic Tendency Scale" (EETS) by Mehrabian and Epstein, "The General Emotional Orientation of Personality" technique by Dodonov, "Emotional Quotient questionnaire" (EQ) by Hall were used to assess the emotional sphere. The students who participate in volunteer activities were significantly more likely to use internal motivation for making moral decisions. Indicators of external motivation were also significantly higher for them. The emotional sphere of volunteers is characterized by a greater expression of altruistic and praxis emotions, and a higher emotional awareness. They also have the least pronounced psychological protection of the "isolation of emotions" type.

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## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1. Volunteering as a subject of psychological research**

In recent years, volunteering and volunteering activities have been the subject of close attention from researchers. In the history of various societies, volunteering has always existed, but it was implemented in those forms and forms that were relevant in a particular historical era. Many countries use the volunteer resource to implement major programs to address socially significant issues. The reasons for the rapid development of volunteer movement in the Russian Federation were the holding of mass sports events – the Universiade of students in Kazan in 2013, the Olympic games in Sochi in 2014, the world Cup in 2018.

Attracting young people to the social practice of volunteering is the most important educational task of University education. Volunteer activity strengthens the prosocial orientation of the youth, activates initiative, preserves spiritual domestic traditions, affirms the values of kindness and mercy, compensates for the lack of social justice and encourages to understand moral values (Cherekaeva, 2018; Kislyakov et al., 2019; Pavlova & Konstantinova, 2017; Zinova & Krasnova, 2018).

Different authors study the psychology of volunteering in various aspects: who is the subject of volunteer activity and for what reasons do they become volunteers? The dominant motivations of volunteer activity, the process of volunteering, recruitment of volunteers, their training and adaptation, psychological readiness and psychological quality are investigated (Borodaeva & Rudneva, 2014; Polyakova, 2018; Raskhodchikova & Sachkova, 2019).

Whillans et al. (2016) have conducted a large study to answer the question: "Does volunteering improve psychological health?" It was showed that helping others is often accompanied by improved mood and greater subjective well-being. However, the correlation was not as strong as the authors expected based on previous studies. So the further detailed study of the numerous factors accompanying pro-social behavior of volunteers is required.

Steffen et al. (2009) studied the long-term consequences of spontaneous volunteering for those who helped victims of the terrorist attack on September 11, 2001 in New York. It was conducted the series of in-depth interviews with 23 volunteers during the weeks following the attack. Three years later, they interviewed 20 volunteers in the second series of interviews. The results showed an obvious long-term effect on participants' personal improvement. In addition, the opportunity to become a volunteer had a long-term impact on the self-esteem of volunteers, leading to significant changes in their life choices. The second series showed that the experience of actions affected the relationship of volunteers in society and contributed to better identification with members of their community and intimacy with them. In addition, working in disaster response teams contributes to increased engagement in these groups, even during non-disaster periods.

### **1.2. Research of volunteers' personality**

Types of prosocial behavior, empathy, altruism, intelligence are often studied in empirical researches of the student volunteers' personality (Bell & Showers, 2021; Slattery & Finnegan, 2019).

Moral and emotional qualities, especially empathy and types of prosocial behavior are the most relevant among the personal characteristics of volunteers (Matsuba et al., 2007; Dovidio & Banfield, 2015). However, there is no unambiguous data on what kind of personal qualities a volunteer should have yet. At the same time, volunteering is considered safe and positive prosocial behavior including in moral behavior.

First of all, a correlation between the moral qualities and successful voluntary assistance to others is noted. Pavlova and Konstantinova (2017) have revealed a positive impact of participation in the volunteer movement on the formation of moral orientation of students. Zinova and Krasnova (2018) have carried out an empirical psychological study of students engaged in volunteer activities and not participating in it. The prevalence of humanistic orientation with altruistic accentuation and higher levels of communicative, altruistic and practical types of emotional orientation among volunteer students is reliably confirmed.

In empirical study of socio-psychological factors and forms of prosocial activity of young people it was found that the "emotional" and "public" types of prosocial behavior are more pronounced in respondents who do not participate in volunteer activities (Cherekaeva, 2018). It is also concluded that there is a high level of motivation of volunteers to volunteer assistance and their focus on altruistic behavior. In empirical study of students who are ready and not ready to participate in volunteer activities it was showed that students-future psychologists have both a greater degree of willingness to become volunteers and a higher level of empathy and altruism than students - future managers (Rashkodchikova & Sachkova, 2019).

## **2. Problem Statement**

### **2.1. Prosocial behaviour and its motivation**

Prosocial behavior is a multi – faceted, heterogeneous structure manifesting itself in various prosocial actions through situations and motives, and has a moral peculiarity (Carlo & Randall, 2002). Such a behavior is especially pronounced in emergency situations, in emotionally charged situations, and in situations of anonymous assistance to others. The motives of prosocial behavior can be either altruistic, hedonistic or egoistic. It is assumed that the motivation for different types of prosocial behavior may be different.

Volunteering teaches participants to empathize. Empathy can lead to prosocial behavior, as the volunteer anticipates pleasant feelings after achieving a specific result (Silva et al., 2009). Prosocial behavior often includes altruistic motivations (motives for helping and caring for others). Altruistic motive manifests itself in sympathy, satisfaction of the needs of helpless, in desire to take care of, comfort, protect those who need it. The volunteer's own beliefs and desires help to manifest altruism of any pressure from the outside and based on the moral norms of society.

### **2.2. Empathy as a determinant of prosocial behavior**

The idea about empathy as a determinant of prosocial and altruistic behavior has been widely studied by psychologists (Batson, 1998; Eisenberg, 2000; Hoffman, 1982). There is a broad discussion

regarding the origin of the empathic response and its mediating role in motivating altruistic actions, while examining the circumstances in which the relationship between empathy and altruism is most pronounced (Coke et al., 1978; Scott, 2011).

Bell and Showers (2021) conducted a systematic study of factors positively predicting moral prosocial behavior. It is shown that empathy makes a significant contribution to the motivation of such behavior.

### **3. Research Questions**

We assumed that respondents participating in volunteer activities differ from those who do not participate in it by specific characteristics of the emotional and moral spheres of personality. At the same time, they differ both in the moral and emotional characteristics of personality.

We also suggested that volunteer students have a more mature moral sphere of personality, more active life position and a higher level of altruism and empathy.

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

To study the indicators of moral sphere of personality in three groups of students: participating, not participating in volunteer activities and those who are ready to participate, but have not yet participated.

To study the characteristics of emotional sphere of personality in three groups of students: participating, not participating in volunteer activities and those who are ready to participate, but have not yet participated.

### **5. Research Methods**

#### **5.1. Sampling and research stages**

The study involved 294 students of 1-2 courses, studying in the specialty of educational psychologist, aged 19-21 years.

At the first stage, two groups of students participated in the empirical study: 1) 42 volunteers with real experience of volunteer activity from 1 to 3 years; 39 students without experience of volunteer activity.

At the second stage, 213 students participated in the study: 85 with experience in various areas of volunteer activity, 63 without such experience but with intentions to participate in the future,

65 students had no experience in volunteer activities and did not want to participate in it in the future.

#### **5.2. Methods for studying the moral sphere of personality**

The projective technique "Friend-Adviser" - a set of 31 situations of moral choice (Veselova, 2007). Respondents are offered to resolve situations of moral choice with following instruction: "Imagine that you are approached by Your friend with a request to give advice in a difficult situation. Give this

advice to each question in writing in one or more phrases". Each situation is a moral choice is based on the ability to violate or fulfill any of the accepted moral norms: "respect your elders and teachers", "be true to your word", "do not leave your children", "do not lie", "do not denounce", "do not leave close persons in trouble", "do not break the laws", "pay back debts", etc. Examples of such situations: "Parents ask to help them take care of a sick grandfather, and I don't have much time. What do you say?"; "My older sister has a disabled child, she wants to give it up and asks my advice. What do you think I should advise her?». Indicators of the moral sphere state are: the number of positive and negative decisions of moral choice, the number of evasive answers, as well as the frequency of occurrence in the respondents' responses of certain types statements obtained after content analysis.

The prosocial tendencies measure (PTM) by Carlo and Randall in the adaptation (Kuhntova, 2011). The authors described and identified six types of pro-social behavior: compliant (helping when asked), public (helping in the presence of others), anonymous (helping in secret), emergency (helping in emergency situations), emotional (helping in situations that cause strong emotions), and altruistic (helping without waiting for a reward).

### **5.3. Methods for assessing the characteristics of emotional sphere**

To study the characteristics of the emotional sphere, the following techniques were used:

EQ - "The Scale of Emotional Response" (Emotional Quotient questionnaire) by Hall to assess "emotional intelligence" reveals the ability to understand the interpersonal relationship represented in emotions and control the emotional sphere on basis of decision-making (Il'in, 2001).

"The General Emotional Orientation of Personality" by Dodonov (Smirnova & Naumkina, 1997). The following types of emotional orientation are distinguished: altruistic, communicative, gloric, praxic, pugnic, romantic, gnostic, aesthetic, hedonistic, akisitive.

"Emotional Empathic Tendency Scale" (EETS) by Mehrabian and Epstein (Rogov, 1999). The questionnaire allows to analyze the general empathic tendencies, the level of expression of the ability to emotionally respond to the experiences of another and the degree of correspondence/discrepancy between the sign of the experiences of the object and the subject of empathy. The objects of empathy are social situations of everyday life.

## **6. Findings**

### **6.1. Results of the empirical study - first stage**

At the first stage of the study, two groups of respondents were studied: 1) volunteer students (42 people), 2) students who do not participate in volunteer activities (39 people). The nonparametric Mann – Whitney U-Test for independent samples was used to assess the significance of differences.

There are discovered significant differences in the moral and emotional personality spheres of students-volunteers and students who do not participate in volunteer activities (table 1). The results showed no significant differences in emotional intelligence and in level of empathy, as well as in the types of prosocial behavior.

**Table 1.** Significant differences in the indicators of moral and emotional sphere in the groups of students participating and not participating in volunteer activities

Indicators	The amount of accumulated ranks		U	P
	Those who participated in volunteer activities N=42	Those who have no experience of volunteering N=39		
Frequency of statements such as "internal motives of moral choice": conscience, guilt, feelings of responsibility	1946.00	1180.00	584.00	0.05
Frequency of statements such as "external motives of moral choice": duty, social norms, fear of censure, etc.	1980.00	1114.00	550.00	0.03
The expression of the gloric type emotions	1461.00	1699.00	471.00	0.03

Significant differences were obtained for two indicators of the personality moral sphere of the students in two groups. Specifically, student volunteers were significantly more likely to have statements of moral choice internal motivation (statements with references to conscience and unpleasant experiences in connection with negative moral choices violating moral norms). They also significantly more often appeared statements of moral choice external motivation (references to debt, external obligations, sanctions, etc.). Such differences indicate a more formed and developed moral sphere of students-volunteers. It can be said that volunteer students are of more mature personality than students who do not participate in volunteer activities.

## 6.2. Results of the empirical study – second stage

There are discovered significant differences in the moral and emotional indicators of personality, depending on their participation in volunteer activities (table 2). Those students who do not participate in volunteer activities were also asked whether they would like to participate in such activities in future. The Kruskal-Wallis analysis on ranks was used to assess the significance of differences.

**Table 2.** Significant differences in the indicators of emotional sphere in three groups of students with different attitudes to volunteer activities

Indicators	Attitude to volunteering			H	P
	Volunteers N=85	Want to participate N=63	Do not want to participate N=65		
Emotional awareness, scores: EQ questionnaire, N. Hall	23.59	22.32	21.74	3.29	0.04
Expression of altruistic emotions, points: Common emotional orientation, B.I. Dodonov	13.25	13.27	11.92	5.35	0.005
Expression of praxis emotions, points: Common emotional orientation, B.I. Dodonov	13.36	12.12	12.63	4.17	0.02
Expression of hedonistic emotions: Common emotional orientation,	11.56	12.46	13.32	4.58	0.01

B.I. Dodonov					
Empathy: EETS, A. Mehrabian and N. Epstein	25.37	25.73	23.37	5.47	0.005
Frequency of statements such as "isolation of emotions" in situations of moral choice: "Friend-Adviser», E.K. Veselova	0.003	0.010	0.010	3.70	0.03

In accordance with the table 2 students with different attitudes to volunteer activities differ in emotional sphere indicators of all the techniques used to study the characteristics of emotionality. As the results showed, volunteer students have a higher emotional awareness and a higher level of the praxis type emotional orientation, i.e. a more active life position. They also have significantly fewer statements like "isolation of emotions" (i.e., denial of the any emotions presence when making a decision in difficult moral situations) indicating their higher adequacy of their feelings awareness in difficult, emotionally loaded situations of moral choice. In addition, there was a higher level of hedonistic orientation among students who do not want to participate in volunteer activities, and an almost equal level of altruistic orientation among students who have intentions to participate in volunteer activities in the future. At the same time, volunteer students are more active and implement their plans in practice.

The results of the tree groups comparison in the level of empathy showed no difference between the groups of volunteers and "willing to participate", but a lower level of empathy in the group of students who do not want to participate in volunteer activities.

At the same time, no significant differences in the types of prosocial behavior were found in three groups of students with different attitudes to volunteering, as in the results of the 1st stage of the study.

## 7. Conclusion

Students-volunteers differ from students who do not participate in volunteer activities by a higher moral maturity: a more developed conscience and a better knowledge of moral principles, a desire to follow them in situations of moral choice. Volunteer students differ from students who do not participate in volunteer activities, but who want to participate in the future primarily in active life position.

It is possible and necessary to foster the readiness of students studying for specialists in helping professions to help people in need of help, as well as to form their personality maturity, in particular internal motivation in the process of moral choice and an active life position. Such education of students should make a significant contribution to the formation of specialists' mature personality forming the desire to help other people without the expectation of receiving any external reward.

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