Motivation, Self-attitude and Control Locus of Senior Schoolchildren

Irine Vartanova a*

*Lomonosov Moscow State University, Moscow, Russia

Abstract

Correlation of motivation parameters (of motivation profile) of the educational activities with the control locus (profile according to the types of social situations) and the self-attitude parameters have been researched considering the sex of senior schoolchildren. For the entire sample group, we reveal a correlation of the general internal with the educational-and-cognitive motivation and the motivation of social responsibility, and the internal in the field of family relations – with the motivation of affiliation. For girls with the educational-and-cognitive motivation, we reveal an additional correlation with the internal in the field of family relations, and for boys with the educational-and-cognitive motivation – with the internal in the field of achievements and production (educational) relations. One can see for the entire sample group (including girls and boys separately) a correlation between the motivation of social responsibility with sociability, proneness to criticism and internal honesty in self-attitude.

Keywords: motivation, self-attitude, control locus, senior schoolchildren

1. Introduction

As well-known [1], the period of formation of integrative self-consciousness and of the “I”’s stable image is the senior school age. At that age, the supraliminal motivation system is being formed, a stable prepotence of a certain motive is generated. Self-analysis becomes the means, not only for organization of mutual relationship with the others, but also for organization of one’s own activities, self-development and self-realization, i.e. it plays an important role in educational activities [2], [3]. Besides, it is very important, how teenagers explain the motives of events, significant for themselves, –where they localize them [4]. Any person is characterized by a

* Corresponding author. Tel.: +7 903 587 3975; fax: +7-495-629-6075.
E-mail address: iivart@mail.ru

© 2014 The Authors. Published by Elsevier Ltd. This is an open access article under the CC BY-NC-ND license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/).
Selection and peer-review under responsibility of Russian Psychological Society.
certain position (locus of subjective control) on continuum, starting with the external type (when the events are interpreted as the result of action of external forces and circumstances, which the person follows passively) up to the internal one (when the events are interpreted as the result of proper actions and activity). Considering all that, naturally, for one and the same person the position will differ, depending on the type of situation and on how it is interpreted. Therefore, we speak of a multidimensional profile, which components are tied to the types of social situations of different grades of generality [5]. However, such profile can be a rather stable personal characteristic, which shows, to which degree the person feels oneself an active subject of proper activity in corresponding fields of life. It is also evident, that the methods of interpretation of various social situations, mechanisms of their casual explanation mainly depend on the general trend of the person, on the formed system of motivation and needs.

However, while acquiring experience, mastering new values and developing a personality, the motivation system is also being developed and changed [6], [7], [8], [9], [10]. Besides, one of the mechanisms of such self-regulation, alongside with a more ancient mechanism of emotional correction of activity, regulation of the reflection systems during formation of new needs and a modification of the motivation system [11], can be a mechanism of conscious evaluation of proper activity in the corresponding field. Thus, the control locus can serve as a good indicator of processes of conscious self-regulation of a personality and of development of the motivation system and must be tied to the motivation, already available. It is especially actual for the senior school age – the most important sensitive period of formation of a personality, when the main convictions and values, methods of conscious self-regulation, motivation system are being enshrined [2].

Besides, an active position of a senior schoolchild achieves a particular importance in corresponding fields of life, reflected in the control locus, which will permit to harmonize proper forces and possibilities with the tasks and plans of proper future life. In that complex of conditions, it is necessary to take into account also the sex of children, – it considerably effects not only the specifics of social roles and not only conditions the personal plans and values of future activities, but also the psychological age (there is a considerable heterochronism in the physical and psychological development of boys and girls), consequently also maturity of motivation-and-value systems of a person.

The aim of this work is to research (considering the sex) the correlation of parameters of motivation of the educational activities of senior schoolchildren (motivation profile) with the control locus (a profile according to types of social situations) and parameters of self-attitude.

2. Methods

Those tested: schoolchildren of 10-11th forms of the Educational Centre of Moscow (total 85 persons, of which 35 boys and 50 girls).

For revelation of the motivation profile, we have analyzed emotional evaluations of the values of the school life according to the system of scales, preset by a pair of adjectives (there were used 25 pairs of adjectives), in conformity with the methods of Semantic differential by Ch.Osgood, adapted by V.F.Petrenko [12]. For the scope, each student was supposed to evaluate by a number from -3 (degree of correspondence to the left adjective in a pair) up to +3 (degree of correspondence to the right adjective in a pair) each of the following seven values of the school life: approval of parents, approval of the teacher, acknowledgement in a community, deep and sound knowledge, my “I” and the authority, school studies, cognition of the nature and the world. The factor analysis was applied to the obtained data, analogous to the one, described in previous researches [11], [9]. As an auxiliary method, a method of incomplete sentences by A.D.Andreeva [13] was used.

For definition of the control locus, a testing questionnaire of the level of subjective control (USC) was used, adapted by Bazhin, Golynkina and Etkind [14], which will permit to evaluate the general internal and the internal in six fields, – in the field of achievements, in the field of failures, in family relations, in production relations, in interpersonal dealings, concerning the health and illnesses.

For definition of self-attitude, we have used the method of “Research of self-attitude” (RS) by S.R.Pantileev [15], which permits to reveal nine types of self-attitude: sociability – closeness, self-confidence, self-
management, reflected self-attitude (expected attitude of the others to oneself), inherent worth, self-acknowledgement (agreement with one’s own internal incentives), self-attachment (absence of desire to change proper “I”), proneness to conflict, self-condemnation.

3. Results

As a result of the factorial analysis of the obtained evaluation of the seven objects of the school life according to the method of semantic differential, for this sample group of schoolchildren, four factors were singled out, which have got the following interpretation. Factor 1 – educational-and-cognitive motivation. Factor 2 – status motivation. Factor 3 – motivation of social responsibility, when the studies are understood as a necessity and hard labor. Factor 4 – motivation of affiliation. The obtained interpretation of factors has been meaningfully confirmed by the results of the methods of incomplete sentences. As a result, the conducted analysis has permitted to define not only the main trends (versions or types) in the individual emotional concern of the researched group of senior schoolchildren in the field of the school life, but also to reveal the specifics of their educational motivation, as well as to determine corresponding individual motivation profiles of each student. This has permitted to further conduct a comparison of expressiveness in the individual profile of corresponding motivation with indices of other methods (with the self-attitude character and with the levels of subjective control in corresponding fields) by means of computation of respective correlations (there was used the Spiermen’s correlation range factor). Correlations were calculated both for the entire selection group, and separately for the group of boys and girls.

It shows, that the nature of correlations between motivation and parameters of the internal and self-attitude considerably depend on the sex of students. It appears, that the expressiveness of the educational-and-cognitive motivation for the entire sample group correlates with the general internal, with the internal in the field of achievements and production (educational) relations (mainly, for the account of boys), and for girls – in the field of family relations. Such motivation is also tied to the nature of reflected self-attitude, – the more the educational-and-cognitive motivation is expressed, the stronger the students are, the more it is characteristic of the girls to think, that their personality, character and activity are capable to cause from the others a positive attitude, sympathy and understanding. Besides, for the entire sample group as a whole (for both, boys and girls) the internal proneness to conflict, doubts and disagreements with oneself are reduced.

The motivation of affiliation is mainly connected only with the internal in the field of family relations (it is significant for the entire sample group, and equally characteristic of boys and girls), with the nature of self-attitude the correlation is not revealed for this sample group. The status motivation reveals a positive interconnection (characteristic, in the first run, for boys) with self-acceptance, feeling of sympathy to oneself, agreement with one’s own internal incentives, acceptance of oneself as one is, as well as a negative interconnection with self-accusation; while for girls there appears a connection of such motivation with reflected self-attitude, belief that they are able to cause from the others sympathy with their own personality and activity. For the students of the researched sample group we do not reveal any significant connections of motivation of this type with parameters of the internal.

The motivation of social responsibility correlates with the general internal (for the entire sample group as a whole), as well as with sociability, deep realization of oneself, inner honesty and proneness to criticism (this is characteristic of both, boys and girls, and is revealed for the united selection group). It also correlates with inherent worth, feeling of the worth of proper personality. The significance of such connection appears only for the united sample group, however, to a greater extent (on the trend level) it is expressed for girls.

4. Discussion

Therefore, the obtained results testify to different natures of ties between the locus of subjective control, expressiveness in the profile of a certain motivation and self-attitude of senior schoolchildren. Besides, as appears, the obtained correlations of motivation with the control locus, however significant, are not very strong.
It means that these correlations are more complicated, than it would seem, at first sight they are determined also by additional conditions and factors. Thus, based on the discussions with some analyzed pupils, it appears, that even for one and the same type of motivation there is a considerable variation in explanation of the motives, which determine their successes or failures in the studies. Moreover, we have revealed considerable sexual specifics, – correlations between the analyzed parameters appeared in some cases different in the groups of boys and girls. However, based on the obtained data, one can affirm, that in the situation of scholastic education, the stronger expressed for the students the educational motivation and a positive emotional orientation to the school studies, solid knowledge and approval of the teacher, the more often they interpret educational events as a result of their own actions and activity. However, not all such students explain proper successes by the applied efforts and pains, but sometimes they call as the cause also other factors, – ability and easiness of the task. However, though, we reveal a general trend in the fact, that students with an expressed motivation of such type trust their actions to be an important factor in the organization of their scholastic activity, in the relations formed in a community, in their scholastic achievements. At a substantial analysis of incomplete sentences of such students, it appears that in a situation of educational (business) communication they at maximum realize themselves and their capabilities. Besides, the revealed connection of the educational-and-cognitive motivation with the general internal and with the internal in the field of achievements testifies that just such motivation and positive experience grant to students the confidence, that they are able to achieve by themselves their targets in the future. Moreover, the sexual specifics of senior schoolchildren with such motivation manifests itself in the boys’ direction in a greater extent to production targets, and the girl’s one – to family relations, i.e. to the spheres, which will become the most important for them in the future. This is well coordinated also with reflected self-attitude, – such students are self-confident and are sure of the positive attitude of their associates, they are positively oriented to the future, they are less prone to conflict (especially boys). As known [16], [17], [18], the internal of the control locus facilitates more normal functioning of a person, inspiring its self-respect. The direct correlation of the reflected self-attitude with the general internal, the internal in the field of achievements and in the field of production relations was previously shown by S.R.Pantileev [15], while for our sample group it shows through motivation of a certain type, – the educational-and-cognitive one.

The degree of expressiveness in a student’s profile of motivation of the social responsibility, (which implies an ambivalent emotional attitude to the studies, as to an indispensable duty), leads to an increase of proper responsibility for proper actions in any significant situation (the general internal). Students with a prepotency of such motivation note (according to the method of incomplete sentences), that they achieve good marks, since they spend many efforts to the studies, they strive very much to act always as they should, in conformity with the requirements and norms. This comes into line also with the nature of self-attitude, – proneness to criticism and reflexivity increase. As a whole, it seems that such complex of properties characterizes the development of a responsible, strong-willed control over proper conduct without expressed sexual specifics.

The evidence of the affiliation motivation in a motivation profile, which intends the orientation to approval and acknowledgement of significant persons (parents included), presupposes an increase of one’s own responsibility, in the first run, for the events, which occur in the family life, which is characteristic of the entire sample group as a whole, no matter which sex there is.

The evidence of the status (position) motivation, when at the emotional level there are of utmost importance the authority and acknowledgement in a community, is connected with the confidence in the positive attitude of the associates, self-acceptance, agreement with proper inner incentives.

5. Conclusion

We have revealed a correlation of some parameters of self-attitude, control locus and a profile of educational motivation, as well as certain gender specifics of such correlations. For the entire sample group we see a weak, but trustworthy correlation of the general internal with the educational-and-cognitive motivation and the motivation of social responsibility, and the internal in the field of family relations – with the motivation of
affiliation. For girls with the educational-and-cognitive motivation, there appears additional interconnection with the internal in the field of family relations, and for boys with educational-and-cognitive motivation – with the internal in the field of achievements and production (educational) relations. We reveal for the entire sample group (including boys and girls separately) a correlation between sociability, proneness to criticism and inner honesty and the motivation of social responsibility. Besides, the motivation of social responsibility correlates with inherent worth, value of proper “I” for the others, status motivation – with self-acceptance, agreement with one’s own inner incentives, while the educational-and-cognitive motivation correlates negatively with self-accusation. For girls with the educational-and-cognitive and status motivation there appears additionally a correlation with reflected self-attitude. At the same time, for boys with the status motivation we reveal a positive correlation with self-acceptance and a negative correlation with self-accusation.

References

[1] Kon I.S. Psihologia starsheklasnika [Psychology of a senior schoolchild]. Moscow: Education; 1982.
[2] Bozhovich LI. Izbrannye psychologicheskie trudy. Problemy formirovaniia lichnosti [Selected Psychological Works. Problems of Personality Forming]. Moscow: International Pedagogic Academy; 1995.
[3] Stolin VV. Samosoznanie lichnosti [Personal Self-comprehension]. Moscow: Moscow University Publishing House; 1983.
[4] Rotter J. Some problems and misconceptions related to the construct of internal versus external control of reinforcement. Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology 1975; 43: 56-67.
[5] Posobie po psihodiagnostike. Pedagogika motivatsii i samoregulirovaniia [Psychodiagnistics manual. Motivation & self-regulation pedagogic]. Moscow: Moscow State University Publishing House; 1990, p.124-127.
[6] Leontiev DA. Psihologia smysla: priroda, strojenie y dinamica smyslovoy realnosti. Moscow: Smysl; 2007.
[7] Vartanova II. Napravlennost lichnosti y strukturna tsennostey v sisteme motivatsii starsheklasnikov [Direction of Personality & Structure of Values in the System of Senior Schoolchildren’s Motivation]. In Tsvetkova LA, Hrustaliova NF, editors. Documents of Scientific Practical Conference “Ananiev Readings 2008” . St.Petersburg; St.-Petersburg State University; 2008, p. 585-587.
[8] Vartanova II. Struktura tsennostey v sisteme motivatsii starslyh podrostkov y yunoshey [Structure of Values in the System of Motivation of Senior Adolescents & Youths]. World of Psychology 2008; 3(55): 131-142.
[9] Vartanova II. Lichnostj starsheklasnika: Motivatsii i sistema tsennostey [Personality of a senior upper-former: Motivations & Value System] Voprosi Psihologii [Issues of Psychology] 2012; 3: 3-11.
[10] Vartanova II. Motivatsii i vnutebnje konflikty starsheklasnikers [Motivation & inner conflicts of senior schoolchildren]. E-Journal “Psychological science & Education” 2012; 2. www.psyedu.ru
[11] Vartanova II. Razvitie uchebnoy motivatsii y tsennostey starslyh shkolnikov [Development of Educational Motivation & Values of Senior Schoolchildren]. Psychological Magazine of International University of Nature, Society & Man “Dubna” 2010; 4. http://www.psyanicma.ru.
[12] Petrenko VF. Vvedenie v eksperimentalnuju psihosemantiku. Issledovanie form representatiysv v obyednom soznaniyi [Introduction to Experimental Psycho-semantics. Research of Forms of Representation in Ordinary Conscience]. Moscow: Moscow University Publishing House; 1983.
[13] Andreeva AD. Osobennosti otnoshenija k ucheniju podrostkov y starslyh shkolnikov [Features of Attitude to Studies of Adolescents & Senior Schoolchildren]: Doctoral dissetation. Moscow; 1989.
[14] Uchebnik vozrastnoy psihologii: Posobie [Manual of age-specific psychology: Training aid]. Golovey LA, Rybalko EF, editors. St.Petersburg: Speech, 2008, p. 527-531.
[15] Pantileev SP. *Metodika issledovania samootnoshenia* [Methods of self-attitude research]. Moscow: Smysl; 1993.

[16] Muzdybaev K. *Psihologia otvetstvennosti* [Psychology of responsibility]. Leningrad: Nauka; 1983.

[17] Fitch G. Effects of self-esteem, perceived performance, and choice on causal attributions. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 1970; 16: 311-315.

[18] Ryckman RM, Cannon DW. Multidimensionality of locus of control and self-esteem. *Psychological Reports* 1975; 37: 786.