REASONS OF STUDENT SOCIAL APATHY

Lubov F. Viaznikova¹, Olga M. Osiyanova², Svetlana V. Salteva³, Maxim S. Fabrikov⁴, Olga N. Belskaya⁵, Anna S. Streltsova⁶, Irina V. Sivova⁷, Tatyana I. Bakanova⁸

¹Pacific State University, Department of Psychology, Khabarovsky, Russia, ²Orenburg State University, Department of English Philology and Methods of Teaching English, Orenburg, Russia, ³Orenburg State Pedagogical University, Department of Pedagogy and Sociology, Orenburg, Russia, ⁴Alexander G. Grigorievich and Nikolai G. Stoletovs Vladimir State University, Vice-Rector for Administrative Work and Management of Economic Complex, Vladimir, Russia, ⁵«ECOLOGY OF THOUGHT» Charitable Fund of L.P. Trojan, Psychologist-consultant, Moscow, Russia, ⁶Moscow Pedagogical State University, Department of Methodology and Technology of Music Education Pedagogy, Moscow, Russia, ⁷Gzelh State University, College, Elektroizolyator, Russia, ⁸Moscow State Pedagogical University, Department of Social and Cultural Activities, Moscow, Russia.

Email: ¹lviaz@inbox.ru, ²olos7@rambler.ru, ³profosalz@mail.ru, ⁴fabrikov33@mail.ru, ⁵belsk76@mail.ru, ⁶an.streltsova2010@mail.ru, ⁷pinrin@mail.ru, ⁸moypochta@bk.ru

Article History: Received on 25th July 2019, Revised on 01st September 2019, Published on 10th October 2019

Abstract

The purpose of the article: The purpose of this study is to identify the social representations of students about the manifestations of social apathy and its causes. The leading methods for the study of this problem are the method of questioning, which allows conducting a qualitative analysis of students’ social representations about the manifestations of social apathy and its causes; to identify the opinion of students about the manifestations of social apathy in the behavior of young people.

Materials and methods: As the main method of research in this work, the method of questioning is chosen.

Results of the research: Positions of overcoming of social apathy are allocated: social apathy is a personal problem with which the person has to cope independently, nobody can help him with it; the help of collective in the solution of this problem is necessary; participation of professional psychologists is necessary. The point of view of students is revealed that the solution to this problem has to be complex: the person, collective, psychologists, other social institutions. A number of features of social behavior attributed to people subject to social apathy are shown: unsociability, isolation, irresponsibility, passivity, immersion in their own problems, exposure to someone else’s influence, and an understated level of claims.

Applications: This research can be used for universities, teachers, and students.

Novelty/Originality: In this research, the model of reasons for student social apathy is presented in a comprehensive and complete manner.

Keywords: student youth, social apathy, causes of social apathy.

INTRODUCTION

Social apathy and anomie arise because of the advance of the economic development of society with respect to the moral development of collective consciousness. Modern Russian scientist V.B. Morozova considers conformal behavior in modern Russian society to be a concomitant of apathy. It arose due to the planting in the process of modernization of values, which are alien to Russia, which in fact represent only the values of adaptation, but not the values of socio-cultural integration. The Western value of success, which is seen not because of individual abilities’ development, but as a goal in itself has become the indirect support for conformism. The consequence of this was the substitution of the existential concept of the meaning of life on image and economic categories of success and lifestyle.

In the second half of the twentieth century, another concept emerged that explained the causes of social apathy by the formation of a culture of mass consumption. The consumer market is saturated; in addition, the spread of the system of consumer loans has allowed to increase the real purchasing power and not to postpone the satisfaction of desires (Cherdymova et al., 2019). There are new means of consumption in the form of Department stores, mega markets, theme parks, etc. The consumer boom begins. The consumer society imposes on people the consumption of material goods and enjoyment as the main goal of life. Post-industrial society is characterized by constant renewal, instability. People do not have a stable position; they have to constantly move, re-equipping their world. Perhaps that is why private life becomes the main thing for a person, and public - secondary. However, saturation and oversaturation of things do not make a person happy (Tastan et al., 2018; Cherdymova et al., 2018; Abishov et al., 2018).

In this case, apathy arises because of oversaturation with material goods. Western authors talk about happy apathy arising from the enthusiasm for consumer everyday life. Studying the social apathy among the modern Russian youth, V.B. Morozova notes that the main reason for the social apathy of a large part of young people in the totality of mass culture with its ideology of consumption, the redundancy of information that cannot be critically comprehended. The increasing value of consumption, especially characteristic of youth, promotes the formation of a selfish type of person, seeking first and foremost to the safety and comfort. In addition, the reasons for the social apathy of young people include
misinterpretation of the values of justice, mutual assistance, patriotism, altruism, etc. This process is caused by the fact that social institutions offer behavioral models that disorder the population, especially young people. In modern society in everyday life, there is a simplification of language, culture of speech and culture of behavior (Martínez-Alcalá et al., 2018).

Thus, we can talk about two approaches to the study of social apathy. The first approach considers apathy because of anomie. Value disorientation causes a person to feel insecure, powerless, unwilling to participate in public life, as well as actively build their own lives. The second approach links the mass spread of social apathy with consumer society. The value of things imposed on people in contrast to spiritual values deprives people of interest in the ongoing social processes. In both approaches, the origins of social anomie lie in the value system of the individual and society.

Social apathy is a socio-psychological phenomenon that describes the social self-feeling and social behavior of individuals (Cherdymova et al., 2018). The behavior of people always has an emotional color due to the characteristics of a person’s mental life. Social action and behavior are accompanied by a certain emotional state, which is a product of spiritual and practical development of the world and is manifested in social sympathy (Khusainova et al., 2018). Social self-feeling is the most important characteristic of human assistance with society. Social self-feeling is a holistic emotional and cognitive attitude to life. It is objectified in the form of circumstances of life, processes taking place in a closed environment, city, region, country. Indicators of social self-feeling are subjective self-estimations. They act as constructions with cognitive and emotional bases, measuring not only private spheres of life (family-marriage, friendship), but also the quality of the external living environment (political, cultural, social aspects of human activity) (Yerizon et al., 2018; Rogaleva et al., 2018).

Social apathy as a type of social well-being is a reflection of the processes that take place in society. There are several groups of reasons that cause the state of social apathy in modern Russian society.

First, it is a sharp change of value systems caused by the rejection of the socialist path of development and the transition to the capitalist path. This is pointed out by V.G. Fedotova, who notes that anomie and social apathy in Russia arose due to the rapid change of economic relations to the capitalist in the absence of new moral justifications for this activity. (Fedotova, 2005) The values that people took for granted and the reproducible order of things achieved practically and behaviorally were destroyed in a short historical period (Velieva et al., 2018).

The second reason is the growing individualization of society. Individual freedom is declared the highest value in relation to the interests of social groups and the state.

The third cause of apathy is related to the social self-feeling of people living in the information society. A huge flow of information, literally falling on people every day, destroys the whole picture of the world. People are lost in this information, cannot establish cause-and-effect relationships, to understand the essence of what is happening.

The fourth reason is the satiety’s oversaturation with material goods, characteristic of the consumer society. It generates a state, which is called happy apathy by Western scientists. Consumer everyday life creates the illusion of well-being and life satisfaction. In fact, one feels confusion in the face of technical progress and the inaccessibility of true happiness. Society wallows in comfort, trying to artificially give meaning to their lives. Apathy resulting from material oversaturation is a sign of anhedonia. Anhedonia is the loss of spiritual joy of life. Feelings in humans fade, life loses its attractiveness. Without satisfaction from the material pleasures available, people are looking for more and more and are in a constant sense of dissatisfaction. Anhedonia is called a disease of civilization.

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The target sample was used in the selection of informants. Student youth is a certain group that is allocated among young people on the principle of education at the University, most often it includes young people aged 16 to 24 years.

As the main method of research in this work, the method of questioning is chosen. To achieve this goal, the following tasks were formulated:

1. To find out the ideas of young people about the essence of social apathy, the degree of its prevalence among students and characteristic behavioral traits.
2. To study the opinion of students about the manifestations of social apathy in the behavior of young people.
3. To study the opinion of students about the manifestations of social apathy in various spheres of life.
4. To find out the opinions of students about the causes of social apathy.
5. To determine what consequences social apathy of students can have, according to respondents’ opinion.
6. To study students’ opinions on what should be done to overcome social apathy, including whether they can independently overcome social apathy.

After conducting a pilot study, we obtained the following results:
Students who participated in the survey had an idea of what social apathy was. They agree that it exists in the student's environment (96%);

Not all participants in the study consider it typical for students. Several people (11%) express the opinion that apathy is a temporary psychological state, usually not peculiar to students;

38% of respondents express the opinion that apathy among students is a personal problem related to the personal life of the student, his/her family relations;

Most students consider apathy a social problem (88%). They believe that students, like the whole society, are covered by it equally;

Students believe that apathy can be overcome (73%), but students' opinions on how to overcome apathy differ.

RESULTS

In our study, we found that students define social apathy as indifference to other people; indifference to what is happening in society; lack of life goals in humans. There are different opinions about the prevalence of social apathy among students. Most of the informants believe that students are covered by apathy as well as the whole society, i.e. see it as a social problem. The smaller part of informants expresses the opinion that social apathy is a phenomenon not characteristic for students.

On the question of how, in their opinion, the behavior of an apathetic person differs from a non-apathetic, various answers were received. Informants note such feature as unwillingness to communicate with other people: "...this is an ordinary quiet person who has little interest in communicating with others, he has few friends and few interests...."; "... they do not want to go anywhere, do not want to study, do not want to do anything, stay at home, watch TV, get stuck in contact, leaf through the news. (54%)"

Informants believe that an important feature of the apathetic persons is their immersion in their own problems:

"Well... as a rule, students simply do not want to learn, or on the contrary go deep into the study and they are not interested in anything else." (21%)

The informants also note the psychological characteristics of apathetic people. Students expressing opinions about what is more important for apathetic students often repeat the idea of focusing on themselves.

"The most important thing? Probably, some personal needs, initial..."; "...probably the most important thing for them is complete seclusion..."

In the given judgments, individualistic priorities in the behavior of apathetic students are noted. The following informant spoke more clearly in this regard:

«Well, most importantly, first of all, their personal comfort, in their so-called world. I can use the expression "I am fed up, that's enough" that is, socially apathetic students, first of all, take care to satisfy a certain minimum of their desires, needs and that’s all, they are fed up. The least important for them is movement, society, constant company around. Help for loved ones; help for someone who is not a loved one and stuff-stuff."

It is possible to distinguish a number of features of social behavior attributed by informants to the people subject to social apathy.

Behavior towards other people:

- Unsociable, closed 72%;
- Few friends 81%;
- Communicates more through the Internet 46%;
- The important opinion of other people about something 34%;
- Irresponsibility, you cannot rely on him 34%.

The students interviewed believe that people who are subject to social apathy are unsociable, which can probably be the very cause of social apathy, and not only its consequence. Since apathetic people are not sociable, their circle of communication is narrowed to mediate via the Internet (46%). Such people are quite exposed to other people's influence and therefore for them, the opinion of other people on any question becomes especially important (34%). At the same time, it does not play a special role in what sphere someone else's opinion should be taken into account. Behavior towards society:

- Passive 83%;
- He/she doesn't go anywhere, he/she stays at home watching TV 46%;
Not interested in social life 21%.

**Figure 1:** Social behavior attributed by informants to people subject to social apathy towards other people.

In figure 2, you can see how students perceive people who are passive and prone to apathy. An apathetic person does not make active efforts to arrange even his own life, says the 4th year student: "Not apathetic — he is so active, purposeful. And apathetic — he doesn’t care, he goes with the flow."

Students who hold this opinion - 83%. According to students, these people are mostly sedentary; little attend any events, friends, and acquaintances (46%). Attitude to yourself:

- No life goals 81%;
- Immersion in their own problems 51%;
- Exposure to foreign influence 72%;
- Low level of claims 11%.

The question about the causes of social apathy for some respondents seemed to be the most difficult. One of them said so: "...A difficult question, I find it very difficult to answer."

More than half of the respondents associate the emergence of social apathy with the characteristics of the individual and his family (76%). "I believe that this happens, firstly, because of education, because of communication, because of the circle of communication, because of the interests and most likely that just a person does not have a specific hobby in life."

Informants note the impact of family education on the emergence of social apathy: "Maybe because he was given little attention from parents, so he took an example of indifference."

Relations in the family, according to one of the participants of the study, can instill in a person uncertainty, which is then manifested in social apathy: "...initially it depends on the person since childhood. If a person is initially influenced, it is..."
formed, I think, from the family, because if a person is confident, it is unlikely that he will be influenced in the future, at the age."

Thus, students see the interweaving of a number of reasons, because of which a person becomes apathetic: psychological characteristics of a person; circumstances of family life; relationships with other people; events that occur in the team and society. At the same time, the content of the answers shows that it is difficult for students to show the ways and channels of society's influence on the emergence of social apathy.

Women informants are more likely to have a deeper understanding of the causes of social apathy. (78%) so, opinions about the consequences of social apathy can be divided into how many groups:

1. It is not dangerous, it is temporary;
2. It is dangerous only for a person; because of apathy, he becomes passive;
3. It is dangerous for society because it reproduces apathy through family education;
4. It is dangerous for society because due to apathy in the country dictatorship can be established.

Students point to the need for an individual approach to overcome apathy.

"...this question cannot be clearly answered, because each person is an individual, so what can help one, then will not help the other. It seems to me that if a person is closed since childhood, then, strange as it may be, nothing will help him. If only in the future, he will meet another person who will help to reveal it. We need to pay more attention to each other, and then there will probably be no social apathy."

A significant part of respondents states that in overcoming apathy a person needs help from other people. (72%) The team in which he/she is located can provide such assistance. According to the following student, such help can be persistent: "... in any case, you need to help him/her; you need to identify that he/she really has this syndrome and offer or impose somehow some useful literature that can help him/her. Maybe some movies, support him/her, take him/her to public places that he/she might be interested in."

DISCUSSIONS

Social self-feeling is manifested through emotions and feelings. Emotions give rise to a person's various experiences (pleasure, displeasure, fear, joy, etc.), playing the role of orienting subjective signals.

Emotions have a clearly expressed situational character, that is, they express an estimated personal attitude to the emerging or possible situations, to their activities and their manifestations in these situations. The most important feature of emotions is their ability to generalize and communicate; therefore, the emotional experience of humanity is much wider than the experience of individual experiences, as it is formed because of emotional empathy arising in communication with other people. On this basis, we have the right to speak not only about the individual nature but also about the social nature of emotions.

We can distinguish the following types of social self-feeling:

Comfortable type: it is characterized by high life satisfaction, high material security, adequate or inflated self-esteem, confidence in the possibility of mutual understanding, for example, between ordinary people and the government.

Uncomfortable type: it is characterized by dissatisfaction with life, as a rule, a difficult financial situation, low self-estimation, confidence in the impossibility of mutual understanding between rich and poor, pessimistic Outlook for the future.

Indifferent type: regardless of the financial situation may arise among the poor, because of awareness of their own impotence, inability to change their position, despair, and among the rich - as a reaction to the oversaturation with material goods. This type of social self-feeling is nothing but apathy, which is synonymous with hopelessness for the poor and oversaturation for the rich.

The types of identified social self-feeling are characterized by the predominance in the mood of a person, group or society of a pronounced optimistic (joy, delight, jubilation), pessimistic (sadness, fear, horror) or neutral-detached (melancholy, boredom, indifference, apathy) attitude. These forms of self-feeling do not exist in pure form, representing a "synthesis of different socio-psychological States", with a predominance of a certain component. Under certain conditions, "these identified States can gradually and imperceptibly merge and move into an emotionally-colored state."

It is the hopelessness of their future with dissatisfaction with the real social situation that generates a very different range of States - from apathy and indifference to deep experiences.

CONCLUSION

Social self-feeling depends on the financial situation, self-estimation, optimistic or pessimistic perception of reality. In addition, if the way of perception of reality can depend on life orientations, attitudes, worldview, forming self-identity, the
Apathy is a serious pathology in which a person becomes completely insensitive, indifferent; he/she lost his/her former personal identity. Apathy is often seen because of severe and prolonged affective deprivation or severe stress. It is the product of a defensive struggle against unbearable feelings of despair and loneliness or the threat of death (especially during war). External manifestations of apathy have the character of alienation - rejection of the objective world, but the analysis often reveals the remaining unconscious attachments, denied or disavowed by the protection.

Apathy is a serious pathology in which a person becomes completely insensitive, indifferent; he/she lost his/her former values, desires, incentives and motivation for action (Selivanova, Gromova and Mashkin, 2018). Apathy, as a protective mechanism, takes a person away from reality.

REFERENCES

1. Abishov, S., Polyak, D., Seidullaeva, G., & Kermeshova, Z. (2018). Meaning of fiction in formation of students identity. Opción, 34(85-2), 186-204.
2. Cherdyymova E.I., Faleeva L.V., Ilkevich T.G., Sharonov I.A., Sayfutdinova G.B., Leusenko I.V., and Popova O.V. (2019). Socio-Psychological Factors that Contribute to and Impede the Process of Student Eco-Vocational Consciousness Formation. Ekoloji, 28(107): 133-140
3. Cherdyymova E.I., Ukolova L.L., Gribkova O.V., Kabkova E.P., Tararina L.L., Kurbanov R.A., Belyalova A.M., and Kudriniskaya I.V. (2018). Projective Techniquesfor Student Environmental Attitudes Study. Ekoloji, 27(106): 541-546.
4. Khusainova, S.V., Matveyeva, L.V., Ermilova, L.P., Yakushevskaia K.N., Kolomiychenko, L.V., and Mashkin, N.A. (2018). Adaptive model of psychological and pedagogical accompany of student professional training. Espacios, 39(05): 22.
5. Martínez-Alcalá, C. I., Ramírez-Salvador, J. A., Rosales-Lagarde, A., & Jiménez-Rodriguez, B. (2018). Assistance and Support of Primary Caregivers through an eService Platform. Journal of Information Systems Engineering & Management, 3(1), 09. https://doi.org/10.20897/jisem.201809
6. Rogaleva, I.Yu., Fatyanov, A.A., Shcherbakov, V.A., and Rogaleva, G.A. (2018). Special liability of biathletes. Teoriya i Praktika Fizicheskoy Kultury, 8:77-79.
7. Selivanova, O.G., Gromova, C.R., and Mashkin, N.A. (2018). Improving student motivation for learning the second foreign language. XLinguae, 11(1): 218-229. https://doi.org/10.18355/XL_2018.11.01.18
8. Taştan, S.B., Davoudi, S.M.M., Masalimova, A.R., Bersanov, A.S., Kurbanov, R.A., Boiarchuk, A.V., Pavlushin, A.A.(2018). The Impacts of Teacher’s Efficacy and Motivation on Student’s Academic Achievement in Science Education among Secondary and High School Students, EURASIA Journal of Mathematics Science and Technology Education, 14(6), 2353-2366. https://doi.org/10.29333/ejmste/89579
9. Veleva, S.V., Mashkin, N.A., Khairullina, E.R., Semenova T.N., Varlamova M.E., Guseva, T.S., and Dolgasheva, M.V. (2018). University student professional selfactualization: Context of personality subjectivity. Espacios, 39(20): 12.
10. Yerizon, Putra, A. A., & Subhan, M. (2018). Mathematics Learning Instructional Development based on Discovery Learning for Students with Intrapersonal and Interpersonal Intelligence (Preliminary Research Stage). International Electronic Journal of Mathematics Education, 13(3), 97-101. https://doi.org/10.12973/iejme/2701
11. Forman, T. A., & Lewis, A. E. (2006). Racial apathy and Hurricane Katrina: The social anatomy of prejudice in the post-civil rights era. Du Bois Review: Social Science Research on Race, 3(1), 175-202. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1742058X06060127
12. Hall, D., & Buzwell, S. (2013). The problem of free-riding in group projects: Looking beyond social loafing as reason for non-contribution. Active Learning in Higher Education, 14(1), 37-49. https://doi.org/10.1177/1469787412467123
13. Sashittal, H. C., Jassawalla, A. R., & Markulis, P. (2012). Students’ perspective into the apathy and social disconnectedness they feel in undergraduate business classrooms. Decision Sciences Journal of Innovative Education, 10(3), 413-446. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4609.2012.00346.x
14. Sarfaraz, A., Ahmed, S., Khalid, A., & Ajmal, M. A. (2012). Reasons for political interest and apathy among university students: A qualitative study. Pakistan Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology, 10(1), 61-67.
15. Márquez, P. G. O., Martín, R. P., & Brackett, M. A. (2006). Relating emotional intelligence to social competence and academic achievement in high school students. Psicothema, 18, 118-123.
16. Fox, J. E. (2004). Missing the mark: nationalist politics and student apathy. East European Politics and Societies, 18(3), 363-393. https://doi.org/10.1080/0888325404266940
17. Jassawalla, A., Sashittal, H., & Sashittal, A. (2009). Students’ perceptions of social loafing: Its antecedents and consequences in undergraduate business classroom teams. Academy of Management Learning & Education, 8(1), 42-54. https://doi.org/10.5465/amle.2009.37012178
18. Altbach, P. G. (1979). From revolution to apathy—American student activism in the 1970s. Higher Education, 8(6), 609-626. https://doi.org/10.1007/BF00215985
19. Johnson, B. (2005). Overcoming “doom and gloom”: Empowering students in courses on social problems, injustice, and inequality. Teaching Sociology, 33(1), 44-58. https://doi.org/10.1177/0092055X0503300104
20. Block, J. H., Haan, N., & Smith, M. B. (1972). Activism and apathy in contemporary youth. In College and Student (pp. 393-407). Pergamon. https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-08-016785-5.50037-7