Components of Social Maturity in Students

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Abstract: This article provides an analysis of theories of social maturity, as put forth by numerous scholars, demonstrating the theoretical and practical significance of students' social maturity in contemporary society. The study presents an in-depth exploration of the concept of social maturity, including an individual's lifetime achievements, societal status, personal and professional accomplishments, philosophical perspective, notable character traits, and values. Moreover, this piece elucidates the phenomenon of social maturity, expounding upon its investigation via psychological research. It further sheds light on psychological external and internal factors influencing the student, psychological elements of social maturity, age-specific characteristics, processes of professional growth and adaptation, social maturity development, motivational aspects of career selection, and contemporary scientific psychological constructs of social maturity.

1 INTRODUCTION

Today, the concept of maturity is frequently employed to classify various age stages of an individual. During the 1960s and 1970s, maturity was typically synonymous with 'middle age'. According to J. Birren's research, 'maturity' is equated with old age, categorised into the following stages: adolescence (12-17 years), early adulthood (17-25 years), full maturity (25-50 years), late maturity (50-75 years), and old age (over 75 years). Researchers such as A.K Bolotova and T.Z Kozlova concur that adolescence marks the onset of maturity. It is acknowledged that each age phase is characterised by distinct developmental stages, evident in familial, educational and student training, new forms of activities, and physical traits. The notion of a 'mature individual' has been consistently evaluated in most literature. Investigative psychologists have also considered characteristics of a mature individual, including their activity, creativity, behaviour in social scenarios and interpersonal relationships, as well as purposeful and efficient thinking skills. Ancient Greek philosophers depicted maturity as 'acme', signifying a high level of achievement based on age and mental state.

The term 'acme' is presently utilised in pedagogy and psychology. N.N Rybnikov first scientifically introduced 'acmeology' in 1928, defining maturity as the most productive and creative phase of human existence (Ribkina I.V. (2000)). A.A Bodalev interprets 'acme' as embodying human potential and strength - social, moral, professional, and psychological maturity. He concludes that 'acme' represents personal development, indicating a person's capacity to exhibit their abilities in any situation and behaviour. A highly developed individual reflects societal cultural values as personal values.

In this regard, the author discerns that growing up and maturity are distinct concepts. An individual may age without necessarily reaching maturity. If he abides by a rule in one situation but fails to adhere to it in another, he can be considered 'partially mature' (Bodalev A.A. (2007)). The term 'acmeology' (or 'acme') originates from the Greek words representing a high point, peak, maturity, indicating the optimal growth period.

Psychologists denote the thinking process as responsible for thought regulation, appropriate application, and control. As human life is inseparable from personal thought, researchers highlight the social aspect of thought in their studies. This

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perspective is elaborated in the works of Uzbek psychologist E. Gaziev. Gaziev emphasises the following essential quality of thought: "Independent thinking signifies the ability to set specific objectives, make practical and scientific hypotheses, envision results, and carry out tasks without assistance or guidance, essentially conducting mental research to identify varied ways, methods and means for problem-solving" (Goziev E.G. (2010)). His manual, "High School Psychology," underscores the socio-psychological aspects of students.

Drawing from his research, one of the key characteristics of the student phase is the swift development of social maturity. Social maturity necessitates that an individual possesses the required mental capacities and is capable of assuming roles in social life, raising children, and preparing for labour activities. In my view, the issue of a student's social maturity warrants focused research. Types of social maturity include sexual, civic, professional, socio-economic, spiritual, moral, and psychological maturity. Professor G.B Shoumarov highlights that the concept of 'maturity' is connected with life experience, that is, 'life knowledge'. Individual features of acquiring 'Life skills' and 'University of Life' are also observed. In my opinion, it is crucial to establish a specific criterion of social maturity; a student cannot be deemed mature without life experience and knowledge mastery. When interpreting maturity, it's necessary to analyse diverse facets of an individual's activities.

2 METHOD

Several methodologies were chosen to undertake this research. They include A.A. Rean's adaptation of K. Zamfir's professional motivation questionnaire, M. Schneider's communicative control questionnaire, and Yu.M. Orlov's inventory for determining the level of reflexivity as well as I.G. Timoshuk's survey to determine the level of spiritual and moral responsibility. It would be beneficial to explore these selected psychodiagnostic tools in greater detail.

For instance, for psychodiagnosis of the first component (motivation for future professional work), K. Zamfir's questionnaire on professional activity motivation was chosen, as modified by A.A. Rean (Goziev E.G. (2010)). E. Mitrofanova recommends using this psychodiagnostic tool to investigate an individual's motivation in their chosen profession and their professional activity motivation. This

questionnaire is based on the well-known concept of internal and external motivation. The first framework (internal motivation) probes the importance of the selected professional activity, while the second (external motivation) explores the individual's desire to fulfil other types of needs (material, image, etc.) through their chosen profession (Shoumarov G.B. (2012)).

The results of the psychodiagnostic observations are analysed by calculating the accumulated points based on provided keys on the following scales: internal motivation; external positive motivation; and external negative motivation.

To determine the second component of student social maturity (spiritual and moral responsibility), a questionnaire by I.G. Timoshuk was employed to assess the level of personal spiritual and moral responsibility (Mitrofanova E. (2011)). This survey investigates the moral and ethical responsibility that becomes evident in specific life situations, which is seen as a multifaceted structure necessitating the activation of corresponding spiritual and moral traits in behaviour.

To ascertain the third component of student social maturity (communicative tolerance), V.V. Boyko's survey for determining general communicative tolerance was chosen (Bodalev A.A. (2007)). This method aims to study communicative tolerance, evident in person-to-person information transmission, interaction, and communication. The detected phenomenon includes the capacity to accept different or opposing mental states, behaviours, positions, and lifestyles of others, thereby reflecting a level of tolerance and non-aggression (Boyko V.V. (1996)).

In terms of identifying the fourth component of student social competence (communicative control), . Schneider's "Communicative control questionnaire" was utilised (Goziev E.G. (2010)). This tool is designed to examine the level of communicative control. High scorers, or those with a high level of the identified trait, demonstrate the ability to regulate their emotional displays during communication and know how to behave in any situation. Conversely, those with lower scores may exhibit excessive laxity or even self-satisfaction, typically characterised by frankness and openness (Ribkina I.V. (2000)).

M. Schneider's psychodiagnostic toolkit comprises an explanatory guide consisting of ten

considerations that the respondent must answer by choosing one of the provided options.

The results obtained from the psychodiagnostic observation are processed by calculating, adding together and interpreting the relevant scores using the questionnaire key. To identify the fifth component (reflexivity) of students' social maturity, A.V. Karpov's survey to ascertain the level of reflexivity was employed (Goziev E.G. (2010)). This questionnaire is intended for the psychodiagnosis of reflexivity, which involves an individual's understanding of their own activities and their critical thinking about outcomes and consequences. Moreover, reflexivity presents as a logical form of understanding personal traits and an attempt to logically analyse specific signs and generalisations about the individual themselves and others, and their behaviour. Through reflection, a person can draw preliminary conclusions about personal attributes and characteristics or their formation in others (Timoshchuk I.G. (2002)).

Table 1: Levels of social maturity development in modern students (n = 211)

Levels of social maturity development	Quantitative indicators	
	Quantity	%
High level of social maturity	41	19.4
Moderate to high level of social maturity	42	19.9
Middle high level of social maturity	43	20.4
Below-average development of social maturity	42	19.9
Low level of development of social maturity	43	20.4
Overall	211	100

3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The provided table's data indicates that a substantial number of students display an average (20.4% - 43 individuals) and low level of social maturity development (20.4% - 43 individuals). Students with an average level of this characteristic display an interest in their vocational training, an elevated motivation to study, and demonstrate adequate self-reliance and activity in their cognitive tasks. However, they also show a certain emotional instability and maintain an attitude of constant need for approval and a sensitive reaction to criticism,

indicating a maintained stance of "I am the object, teach me".

In contrast, a low level of social maturity is signified by irresponsibility towards oneself and others, a weak desire to acquire professional knowledge, relative independence in learning activities, inconsistent work, and heavy reliance on teacher control. Students with this level of social maturity also demonstrate low self-esteem, emotional instability, and a lack of reflexive and communicative abilities.

A modest proportion of the participants (19.9% - 42 individuals) exhibited a development of social maturity that ranged from low to moderate to high. Only a small number of participants (19.4% - 41 individuals) demonstrated a high level of social maturity development. At this level, students typically exhibit responsibility, self-knowledge, a desire to understand others, emotional stability, an accurate self-assessment of their abilities, independent judgement and action, and an ability to envision their professional growth prospects. These students generally adhere to the principle of being authentic.

It would be beneficial to briefly analyse the aforementioned data, differentiating between acceptable (high, medium, and high levels of social maturity) and unacceptable levels (low and very low levels of social maturity) in the development of the studied characteristic. Consequently, the majority of participants (59.7%, 126 individuals) are deemed to have an acceptable level of social maturity development. On the other hand, an undesirable level of social maturity development is observed in 40.3% (85 individuals).
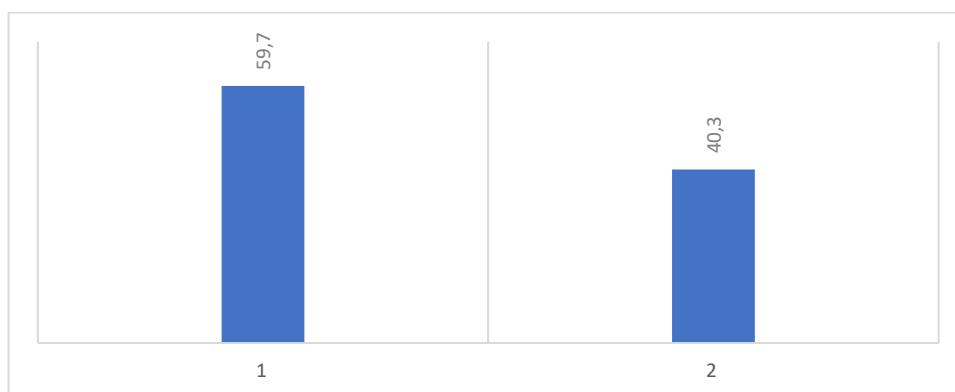
Figure 1: Levels of social maturity development in modern students. (1) the desired level of social maturity; (2) the undesired level of social maturity.

The above correlation analysis results of comprehensive psychodiagnostic observations of contemporary students, utilising the Kendall Tau nonparametric criterion (n = 211), allowed for the identification of statistically significant correlations. These correlations, in turn, suggest a positive influence on the development of the following components of social maturity within the educational process:

1. Communicative tolerance at p <0.001 (-0.42);
2. Work motivation (0.28 at p <0.001);
3. Reflexivity (0.28 at p <0.001);

The implementation of a four-stage mechanism, designed for the generalisation and interpretation of the psychodiagnostic data (n = 211), demonstrated an insufficiency in the positive impact of the educational process on the development of social maturity in higher education students. According to the feedback, most of the participants (59.7%, 126 individuals), when considering desirable (high, average, average levels of social maturity) and unwanted levels (medium and low levels of social maturity), indicated that they possessed a desirable level of social maturity. Currently, 40.3% (85 individuals) display an unwanted (or problematic) level of social maturity development. This reality reinforces the relevance of this dissertation research, underlining the practical necessity of developing efficient tools to foster the social maturity of today's students.

For an objective assessment of the unique structure of modern students' social maturity, considering the accumulated knowledge of previous researchers, the following psychodiagnostic complex has been identified:

1. Motivation for future professional work - K. Zamfir's professional motivation survey, as modified by A.A. Rean, for the psychodiagnostics of the first component.

2. Spiritual and moral responsibility - I.G. Timoshuk's survey to determine the level of personal spiritual and moral responsibility for the psychodiagnostics of the second component.

3. Communicative tolerance - V.V. Boyko's questionnaire to determine general communicative tolerance, aimed at identifying the third component.

4. Communicative control - M. Schneider's communicative control survey for determining the fourth component.

5. Reflexivity - A.V. Karpov's questionnaire for determining the level of reflex development, meant for the identification of the fifth component.

6. Empathy - Orlov and Yu.N. Emelyanov's self-assessment test-questionnaire of empathic abilities, for discerning the final, sixth component.

The use of a prepared four-stage mechanism of generalisation and interpretation of psychodiagnostic data, including the standardisation of final scores (n = 211), revealed that the educational process's positive impact on the development of students' social maturity in higher education is insufficient. Thus, considering desired (high, average, average levels of social maturity) and unwanted levels (low and medium levels of social maturity), the majority of subjects (59.7%, 126 people) possess a desirable level of social maturity. Currently, 40.3% (85 people) show an unwanted (problematic) level of social maturity development. This reaffirms the pertinence of this dissertation research, emphasising the practical necessity for devising effective instruments to foster the social maturity of contemporary students.

4 CONCLUSION

An examination of the methodologies employed by earlier scholars regarding the organisation of the development process of the phenomenon in question indicates that the current societal stage places evolved requirements on the professional training of prospective specialists. This, in turn, heightens the significance of social maturity development in their professional education. This intricate process is typically facilitated through a variety of approaches that necessitate collaborative engagement. In the milieu of a contemporary university, the social maturity of students evolves in alignment with the actual society that encompasses them and can be effectively fostered through the implementation of proactive group work methodologies. In the current context, socio-psychological training appears to be the most fitting approach towards the development of the phenomenon under study. According to the majority of scholars, it should primarily concentrate on those components of students' social maturity that are more amenable to development (or transformation) over a relatively brief timeframe, particularly during the most impressionable age.

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