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**The Role of Self-Regulation in
Moral Self-Determination of the
Young People**

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The Role of Self-Regulation in Moral Self-Determination of the Young People

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Abstract

Our research was focused on young people’s moral self-determination based on different levels of self-regulation. The author’s theoretical model and methodical approach to self-determination study is presented. Self-determination implies active individual self-development, search of ones own existential position and the choice of decisions in problematic situations. The self-regulation phenomenon appears in planning and programming life goal achievements, taking into account significant external and internal conditions, estimation of results and correcting ones’ own activity for subjective-acceptable result achievements, also it appears in the degrees of development and realization of self-organizing processes. The results have shown that young people with a medium level of self-regulation have a less positive moral position than people with high and low levels of self-regulation. For young men, the higher level of self-regulation corresponds to a more positive moral position in the case of separate conceptions of morality and moral strategies. But such regularity isn’t peculiar to young women.

Key words: self-determination, moral self-determination, self-regulation.

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Introduction:

The topicality of research is determined by present-day situation specificity which is moulded by society. Radical social changes in Russia in the 1990's aroused natural social-psychological dynamics at individual and group level, the dynamics of interpersonal and intergroup relations and so on. The substance of the social environment changed. Traditions and social regulators which had been working in the past were now found to be totally destroyed. The individual is in an existential and ideological vacuum in such a situation. It leads him having a need to search for support in himself and also to direct and regulate his own life. At the same time specific social image with accent on superficial attributes of success have been forming in people's consciousness under the influence of mass media. Thus the need for self-dependent choice realization, internal criterion forming, and action taking into account ones' own psychological characteristics come to the fore.

The results of a person's self-determination research became practically in demand, particularly over that period. It really helped scientific problem of self-determination became one of the most important problem in contemporary personal psychology on the level with the other phenomenon of "self". The increase of attention to value-meaning components of person and group, reinforcement of role of subject characteristics (independence, activity, responsibility, reflexiveness and so on), increase of self-determination meaning in comparison with environmental influences could be marked in conceptual models and empirical research programs of many modern authors.

Self-determination phenomenon relates to the category of integral psychological phenomenon. Need in analysis of such phenomenon became more acute just as certain similar psychological phenomenon are elaborated quite well.

Conceptual foundations:

The confluence of freedom and responsibility and the formation of freedom and responsibility in single self-regulated freedom of mature person is mediated by values and meaningfulness.

The mechanisms of value-meaning mediation plays a key role in a person's self-determination (Leontiev, 2002). Rychlak considers the basis of freedom as the capability of a person for himself to proceed from his own wishes and sensible goals formed by them, for determining his own actions, for taking part in system of determination his own activity, for its restructuring and adding causal determination of behavior to purposal (Rychlak, 1979; Rychlak, 1981; Rychlak, 1984).

The conception of Ryan and Deci defines self-determination as the capability of an individual to make choices and having a choice. This understanding gives the opportunity to take into consideration ones own internal choice and the objective, external limitation of his freedom of choice.

Self-determination involves administrating ones own environment or actions directed by results and may also involves rejection of control (Ryan, Deci,

2000). Deci considers that self-determination is not only a capability but also the person's need (Deci, 1980).

The elements of the psychological structure of self-determination is organized hierarchically and constitutes two base levels. The first and highest level is the constant "moral-value core". The second level is the more subordinate and plastic "cover". The main reasons for picking out these components are different degrees of stability in time and different functions in the subject's life. The constant part of self-determination, "value-moral core", also could be named value-meaning, meaning-vital, moral core and ideological position. It consolidates conceptions of the world view and of the human community life meanings, the most significant values and orientations of a person, value ideals, value taboos, the main life capabilities, permissive and prohibitive life principles and life claims (Zhuravlev, Kupreychenko, 2007).

The dynamic and plastic part of self-determination includes conceptions about surrounding social-psychological space, values, goals, motives at different, stages of life, knowledge about current capabilities and resources on each life stage. Besides the "cover", it includes a person's psychological readiness for certain actions which are connected with the achievement of desirable position within social relation to the system of each stage of life. The content of this part of self-determination is dynamic since it reflects value and motivational characteristics of the subject's current vital active stage. Also "cover" is plastic as it changes partly according to external conditions (Zhuravlev, Kupreychenko, 2007).

As a moral self-determination we understand the process of person orientation in the system of moral ideals and values, among people and social groups which are the bearers of this system, also as the conscious process of searching, selecting and creating ones own moral standards and ideals, and after that principles, values, norms and rules based on them. The result of moral self-determination is understood as a moral position. It could be characterized as positive if a person has humanistic orientation, altruistic traits, a capability for self-sacrifice, etc. (Vorobieva, Kupreychenko, 2011).

In the moral self-determination structure there a four main segments could be highlighted. The first segment is self-determination to morality as part of the public conscience and social institution, i.e. self-determination in systems of ideology, philosophical concepts of morality, in the systems of moral values of different age groups and cultures. The subject must define his attitude, elaborate strategy of behavior in case of antagonisms between different ideology systems or ethical concepts and values. The second segment is self-determination to objects and phenomena of surrounding and objective reality. These constituents are especially significant in the process of self-determination in spheres where the role of other factors (political, economic and others) is more important than role of moral factor. The substance of this segment is the moral appraisal of different phenomena in given vital activity spheres (moral appraisal of money, property, political power and others), forming of strategy of behavior in case of collision moral and other person's motives (economic, political, professional) and so on. The third segment is self-determination to other people, groups and society in respect to morality.

The substance of this segment of moral self-determination is forming attitude to human being and mankind and attitude to people and social groups which are the bearers of certain ethical values. Also this segment includes allotment of separate kinds of relations between people by moral meaning and forming of strategies of behavior for interaction with them in different situations. These processes are especially significant in spheres concerning relations between people and in other vital activity spheres where the moral factors have a central regulative role. The fourth segment of moral self-determination is self-determination to oneself as a subject of moral relations. Its main constituents are the moral “ideal self” and the methods and criteria of its achievement.

In Mantonina’s research, the correlation between a moral component of a person and the regulative-volitional parameters was discovered (Mantonina, 1998). Volitional qualities are considered as moral in ethics. There is correlation between volitional and moral qualities. Not only moral qualities promote will-power, but will-power manifestation provides moral behavior. Dependence of children and adults’ behavior from beliefs partly is provided by will, hard expectancies, i.e. by self-control. Self-control in moral sphere is in the repression of moral norms regardless impulse. Sometimes it is named as temptation resistance (Berk, 2006). Self-control transforms to self-regulation already at primary school (Bandura, 1991). Moral self-regulation continues improve till 20 years old (Berk, 2006). Kolesov notes that if the will-power is weak, moral regulation is defective, because it stays on the level of moral norms’ knowledge and the best impulses stays outstanding (Kolesov, 2000). For moral norms acceptance the will participation is necessary (Bondyreva, Kolesov, 2008; Dubrovsky, 2009). Moral education out of will activity derives to declarative morality (Ilyin, 2009). Many authors (Osnitsky, 1992; Stepansky, Prygin, Farytin, 1987) note the important role of self-regulation in self-determination. Some of them (Pryajnikov, 1996) even includes self-regulation to the substance of self-determination. In Zhuravlev and Kupreychenko’s conception the process component of self-determination includes the most general, stable elements of self-regulation (Zhuravlev, Kupreychenko, 2007). The process of self-determination could be successful if developed functional structure of self-regulation had formed (Morosanova, Aronova, 2007). In Ovchinnikova’s paper self-regulation is one of the components of person’s experience of regulatory abilities – determinant foundation of internal activity of choice in self-determination’s situation (Ovchinnikova, 2004).

The self-determination process could be successful in case of advanced structure of self-regulation had arisen. The processes of initiation and bringing up goals of activity and control of its attainment are belonging to self-regulation phenomenon. Formation of conscious self-regulation allows the subject use moral norms, values, etc. as regulators of his course of life.

Methods:

1. questionnaire “Personality moral self-determination” (A.E. Vorobieva, A.B. Kupreychenko). It holds three meaning blocs: “conceptions of morality”,

“moral strategies” and “individual moral orientations”. Bloc “conceptions of morality” includes following scales: 1) origin of morality (statements of origin of morality about natural origin of morality or its specially organized forming in society); 2) significance of morality for the society (it allows to appreciate person’s conceptions of meaning and role of morality in society life); 3) absolute or relativity of morality; 4) recompense for good and evil (it allows to appreciate person’s expectations of reward for moral acts and punishment for immoral acts); 5) personal morality as an indicator of person’s strength or weakness; 6) nature of individual morality (high index corresponds to internal personal moral control, realization of ones own responsibility for moral appearance and ethical behavior). Bloc “moral strategies” estimates cognitive, emotional and conative components of individual attitude to different hands of moral behavior. Bloc includes following scales: 1) obligation or non-obligation of moral norms observance (it allows to appreciate person’s attitude to moral norms observance in all conditions unconditionally and opposite views); 2) activity or passivity in moral behavior (it allows to appreciate person’s attitude to necessity of display, save and defend morality in society); 3) mutuality or non-mutuality of moral behavior (it allows to appreciate individual reciprocal acts for moral and immoral behavior). Bloc “individual moral orientations” includes following scales: 1) egocentric orientation; 2) group-centric orientation; 3) humanistic orientation; 4) world-creative orientation (Vorobieva, 2010; Vorobieva, Kupreychenko, 2011).

2. The Style of Behavior Self-regulation - 98 (V.I. Morosanova). It consists from 6 scales: planning, modeling, programming, results evaluation, flexibility, independence. Planning defines individual peculiarities of putting forward and keeping aims, formedness of conscious activity planning. Modeling allows to diagnose individual maturity of conceptions about external and internal significant conditions, the degree of their consciousness, detalization and adequacy. Programming diagnoses individual maturity of conscious programming ones own actions. Results evaluation characterizes individual maturity and adequacy estimation of self and the results of ones own activity. Flexibility diagnoses the level of regulatory flexibility formedness. i.e. ability for reconstruct, correct self-regulation system in case of external and internal conditions change. Independence characterizes maturity of regulatory autonomy.

Sample: youth of 18-35 years old (208 persons).

Hypothesis: Youth with the higher level of self-regulation demonstrates the more positive self-determination.

Results and discussion: In our sample there were 36,9% persons with high level of self-regulation, 46,6% with middle level and 16,5% with low level.

Respondents with higher level of self-regulation demonstrate tendency of the more adherence to the strategy of mutuality in moral behavior on cognitive level (Mann-Whitney test, $z=-1,66$; $p=0,09$). Persons with middle level of self-regulation are characterized by less agreement with conception of personal morality as an indicator of person’s strength (Mann-Whitney test, $z=-1,88$, $p=0,05$), obligation of moral norms observance on emotional level (Mann-Whitney test, $z=-2,02$; $p=0,04$), activity in moral behavior on cognitive (Mann-

Whitney test, $z=-2,29$; $p=0,02$) and conative level (Mann-Whitney test, $z=-1,77$; $p=0,07$) as a tendency (fig.1).

Figure 1. Difference in youth moral self-determination with different self-regulation level.

The separate consideration of men and women samples had shown that women with low level of self-regulation differs from women with high level in more adherence to world-creative orientation (Mann-Whitney test, $z=1,64$; $p=0,09$) only as a tendency (fig.2).

Figure 2. Difference in young women moral self-determination with different self-regulation level.

Men have more differences. The higher level of self-regulation – the more adherence to strategy of activity in moral behavior on cognitive (Mann-Whitney test, $z=-2,12$; $p=0,03$) and conative (Mann-Whitney test, $z=-2,39$; $p=0,01$) levels. Such indicators as significance of morality for the society (Mann-Whitney test, $z=-2,1$; $p=0,03$), personal morality as an indicator of person's strength (Mann-Whitney test, $z=-1,98$; $p=0,04$), obligation of moral norms observance on emotional level (Mann-Whitney test, $z=-2,69$; $p=0,007$) are lower in case of middle self-regulation than in case of high and low level.

Figure 3. Difference in young men moral self-determination with different self-regulation level.

Conclusion: Young people with a medium level of self-regulation have less positive moral position than people with high and low level of self-regulation. It becomes apparent in their conceptions of morality origin and moral strategies and could be explained by deficient compensation of environmental influence and ones' own undesirable characteristics.

Young women's moral self-determination differs only by one moral orientation in the case of different self-regulation level.

Young men with different levels of self-regulation have different moral strategies (activity in moral behavior, obligations of moral norms observance). Also they have some different conceptions of morality (significance of morality for the society, personal morality as an indicator of person's strength). All these differences are in favour of a higher level of self-regulation.

Thus the more positive self-determination is not a prerogative of a person with a high level of self-regulation. But it is true for men. Perhaps such importance of self-regulation for men is explained by their rational point of view.

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Figure 1. *Difference in youth moral self-determination with different self-regulation level*

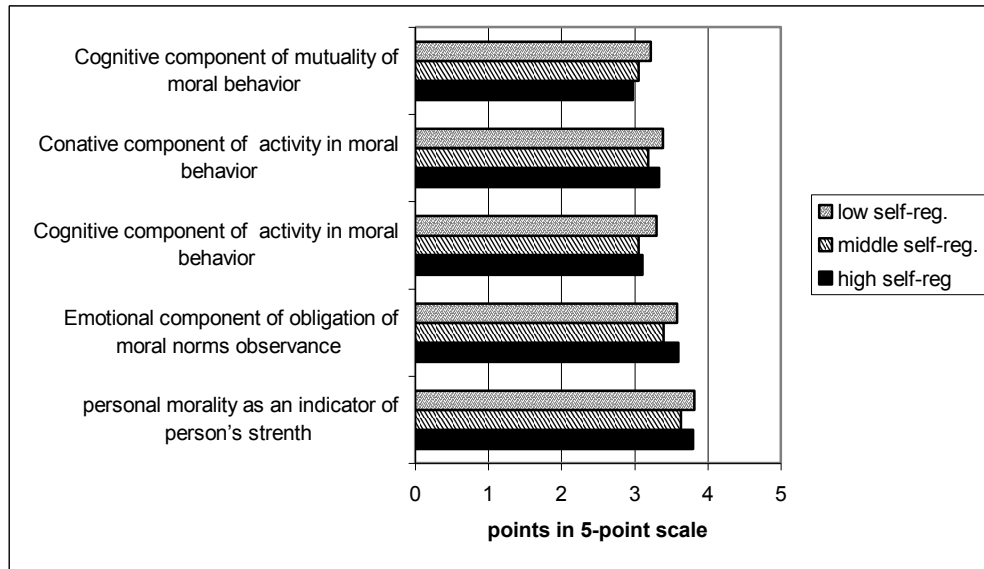


Figure 2. *Difference in young women moral self-determination with different self-regulation level*

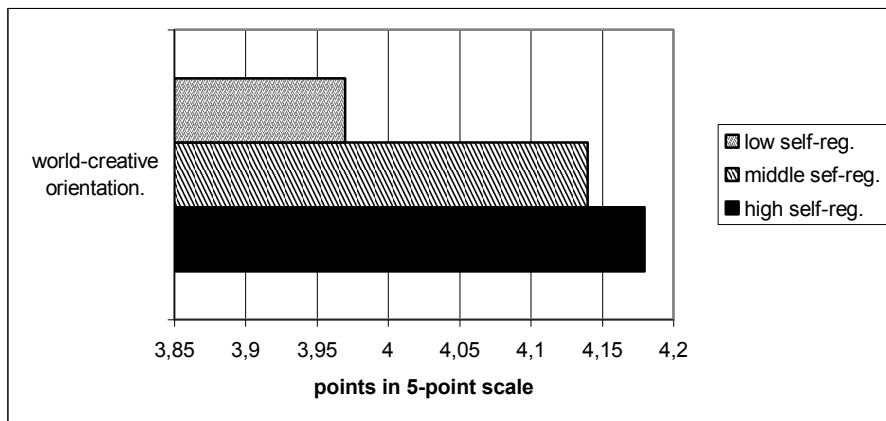


Figure 3. *Difference in young men moral self-determination with different self-regulation level*

