

Research article

Educational Motivation of Students With Disabilities in a Digital Society

E.V. Voevodina*, and **D.S. Raydugin**

Financial University under the Government of the Russian Federation, Moscow, Russian Federation

ORCID
E.V. Voevodina: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6131-8301>
D.S. Raydugin: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5394-764X>

Abstract. This article reveals the peculiarities of educational motivation of students with disabilities. It is noted that the educational motivation and professional orientation of this category of students are associated with two risk groups — intra-personal and environmental risks. By educational risk, the authors mean a factor that has a potential impact on the performance of education at a university. In order to study the risks of students with disabilities socializing, including determining the specifics of their educational motives, in 2018 the authors conducted a sociological study using two survey methods — questionnaires (with 159 students with disabilities) and interviews (with 14 students with disabilities). Students with musculoskeletal impairment were included in the sample, who, due to explicit health disorders, are one of the most stigmatized groups. The study was conducted at the Moscow State University of Humanities and Economics, which has the largest number of students in this category in the Russian Federation. The participating students had almost equally positive and negative educational motives. Important characteristics included the “pragmatism” of professional choice, due to the ease of mastering the profession at the chosen university. It is noted that such motivation entails some risks (for example, a decrease in interest and, as a result, the quality of study). The conclusion emphasizes the importance of access to education (including transport) for students in this group, and the need for an integrated approach in solving the problems of developing inclusive education.

Keywords: vocational guidance, motivation for education, inclusion, educational risk, disabled, student

1. Introduction

The digital society has opened up new opportunities for the inclusion of social groups at risk due to health limitations. Advances in medicine include rehabilitation tools that promote an independent and active life. Technologies of an accessible environment have been developed to provide comfortable conditions for groups with limited mobility. At the same time, the problems of inclusion remain unresolved, although the digital society creates the preconditions for this. The basic institutions that ensure the possibility of a full life for any individual are education and work. However, in Russia, there are a number

Corresponding Author: E.V.
 Voevodina; email:
 ekaterinavoevodina@yandex.ru

Dates

4 February 2022

Publishing services provided by
Knowledge E

© E.V. Voevodina, and D.S.
 Raydugin . This article is
 distributed under the terms of
 the [Creative Commons](#)
[Attribution License](#), which
 permits unrestricted use and
 redistribution provided that the
 original author and source are
 credited.

Selection and Peer-review under
 the responsibility of the Culture,
 Personality, Society Conference
 Committee.


OPEN ACCESS

of barriers for people with disabilities in these areas. For example, the unemployment rate of disabled people of working age in Russia is 23.7% (for comparison, for the population without disabilities, this indicator is 5.4%) [1].

Higher education in the life of a person with a disability can perform a professionalizing function, act as a significant factor in socialization, and increase rehabilitation potential. At the same time, to fulfill the second condition, it is necessary to be fully included in significant communities — professional, scientific, social, etc., as well as develop “soft” skills. From this point of view, the most effective strategy is the inclusion of students with disabilities in “ordinary” educational institutions when studying together with “healthy” peers. The significance of this approach has been repeatedly emphasized by foreign and Russian researchers — the effect of joint training exceeds the indicators of a segregation approach [1].

Inclusive education in Russia is still at the initial stage of formation and is currently active in this area [3]. The first attempts to introduce the ideas of inclusion appeared in the world only in the middle of the twentieth century. Prior to this period, the prevailing paradigm of disability was that persons with disabilities needed a special environment — primarily for treatment and medical care. In the 1950s, due to the efforts of activists from among people with disabilities themselves, the problems of accessibility of other social institutions — education, employment, leisure, etc. were first addressed. It was only with the adoption of the United Nations Convention that disability was considered as one of the identities belonging to the risk group, along with race, class, and gender. However, despite all the positive developments that scientists and activists have achieved over the past half-century, in Russia, disability is still perceived as a socially undesirable property, spread by many stereotypes. Persons with disabilities are often perceived as “undesirable” workers incapable of effective work and training, which affects the employment rates of this social group [1]. In addition, in the very process of training students with disabilities in Russian universities, various risks can appear that have both a medium- and intra-personal nature.

2. Methodology and methods

In order to study the risks of socializing students with disabilities, including determining the specifics of educational motives, in 2018, the authors conducted a study using two survey methods — questionnaires (159 students with disabilities) and interviews (14 students with disabilities). Students with musculoskeletal impairment were included in the sample, who, due to pronounced health disorders, are one of the significant

risk groups. The study was conducted on the basis of the Moscow State University of Humanities and Economics, which accumulates the largest number of students in this category in the Russian Federation. Within the framework of this article, attention will be paid, first of all, to the analysis of educational motives that characterize the readiness of students for professional activity in the labor market.

In the study, it was assumed that the process of professional socialization of a person with a disability was accompanied by specific educational risks. By this category, the authors mean a factor that has a potential impact on the educational performance of a student at a university [4]. In turn, educational risks were divided into two large groups – medium and intra-personal. This distinction was based on the analysis of the Russian experience of research on inclusive education.

Environmental risks, first of all, were associated with the lack of accessibility of the education system for persons with specific needs due to impairment of hearing, vision, the musculoskeletal system, etc. A number of problems may arise due to the lack of continuity of the principle of inclusion, mainly in situations where quality training has not been provided in previous levels of education. Russian researchers Osenkova and Konovalov described four groups of risks arising from a violation of this principle, which, in turn, were indicated by applicants themselves who had a disability during a sociological survey [5]. These include: lack of knowledge obtained at school (40%), health disorders (30%), psychological features that can create difficulties in studying (25%), lack of information culture (5%). At the same time, the “lost” knowledge in the framework of school training subsequently not only affects the quality of education but also serves as a factor in choosing the wrong educational trajectory, when the applicant is guided by the principle of “entering a program where it will be easier to study”.

Intra-personal risks that have a subjective nature are reproduced within the specifics of the socialization of individuals themselves, the status-role set characteristic of representatives of this social group. In the Russian scientific space, such risks were first thoroughly analyzed by representatives of the scientific school of Yarskaya-Smirnova (including Zaytsev, Naberushkina, Romanov). These include the risks of social stigma and “secondary” deviation (self-stigma), expressed in violation of identity, balancing between the status of “disabled” and “student”. If the first gives advantages and “relaxation” in different fields, and, in particular, when entering a university, then the second requires the same participation in the educational process, along with other students. Status deformities can occur when the status of a “disabled person” is also used in the educational process to gain benefits, for example, in assessing educational achievements.

In higher education, status deformities can affect the educational motivation of students. The decrease in interest in training affects the quality of training, the amount of knowledge received, the degree of mastery of skills, which ultimately affects the success of future professional activities. Educational motives can be classified according to various criteria depending on the research approach: the works of Russian psychologists and teachers Leontyev, Bozhovich, Rean, Rubinstein, as well as foreign theories proposed by Maslow, Bandura, Skinshtein. At the same time, classifications are often combined on the basis of several approaches — for example, the publication of Mormuzheva contains a description of the following motives contained in the works of Russian and foreign researchers [6]:

1. Cognitive, which is based on the desire to acquire new knowledge;
2. Social, based on the recognition of the social significance of the future profession, the desire for self-approval in society;
3. Pragmatic motives, consisting in the acquisition of profit;
4. Professional-value, due to interest in the profession, recognition of its personal significance;
5. Aesthetic, due to pleasure from the learning process itself.

One of the most meaningful definitions of educational motivation, taking into account the variety of motives, is given by Primchuk, according to which educational motivation is “a set of motives for educational activity that form a hierarchical system with structural components that include positive and negative motives” [7]. The author includes among the “positive” reasons pleasure from the process of the educational activity itself: the desire for pleasure from applying efforts to learning, the significance of the “positive” result (education), the “moral motivating force” of remuneration. The negative motives are the significance of the “direct” result (obtaining a diploma), material incentives, expressed as remuneration for high learning outcomes, “compelling pressure” to avoid punishment for poor learning outcomes. It can be admitted that depending on the conditions of socialization, an individual may be dominated by certain types of motives, which at the same time are quite dynamic and amenable to external influence.

3. Results and discussion

The nature of educational motivation was revealed on the 5-step Likert scale, with the following question: “What is more important for you to get as a result of training?”.

TABLE 1: Motives of higher education of students with musculoskeletal disorders

Symbol of judgments	Distribution of respondents' responses					Arithmetical mean
	1	2	3	4	5	
A	47	19	30	16	21	2.58
B	21	16	23	31	42	3.42
C	35	23	43	11	21	2.69
D	37	18	38	16	24	2.78
F	23	9	38	31	32	3.30
G	32	14	36	26	25	2.98
H	15	10	34	32	42	3.57

Respondents were offered paired opposing judgments for evaluation. The results of the survey of respondents are presented in Table 1 “Motives of higher education of students with musculoskeletal disorders”. In the case of full agreement with one of the statements, the respondent chose the score closest to him/her, so that the polar judgment received the opposite rating. Among the judgments proposed for evaluation were the following: A — “Get a high level of knowledge, new skills/Get a diploma of graduation”; B — “Get the ability to master new knowledge that will help you adapt quickly in the workplace/Get practical skills that can be immediately used in work”; C — “Get a good education/ Get connections to get better in life”; D — “Learn to get a high-paying job/Learn only what’s interesting”; F — “To graduate from a prestigious university/To get a diploma, the prestige of the university does not matter”; G — “To get a profession in demand in the labor market/To get a profession that meets my capabilities”; H — “To graduate from this particular university, it is not so important in which direction of training/To graduate from this university, since it has the necessary conditions for studying”.

First of all, attention should be paid to opposite values in the extent of consent with the provided statements as they help to distribute respondents on several types of educational motivation. It is conditionally possible to allocate two groups of respondents with pronounced opposite motives; the groups adjoining them which are characterized by not expressed motivation, and also the third group of respondents who can be called “doubting”. The last group can be characterized as the most labile, showing the position depending on external environmental conditions. However, it does not exclude that “doubting” reflects that type of students who are poorly focused in professional self-determination and cannot simply define for themselves key motives of training at a higher education institution. The respondents who expressed the extreme extent of consent with statements A, B, C (the first part) can be called the standard focused type of students for whom the “traditional”, positive criteria of educational motivation

connected with the quality of education keep importance. Those who chose opposite judgments (the second part of judgments A, B, C) can be called the career-focused type of students who pragmatically estimate the got education. For them, the received education is, first of all, a tool in the achievement of personal purposes. The share of such respondents is a little lower in comparison with the standard type — 83 against 103. At the same time, in question A (first part), one can see a considerable prevalence of material incentives over esthetic and informative. Thirty-seven respondents find it important “to study to get a highly paid job” while 24 respondents are interested to study only “out of interest”.

Social motives, such as the prestige of the university, turned out to be generally less significant for students with disabilities — in general, the diploma of higher education itself is important. The availability of training conditions is much more important for respondents. At the same time, it is more important for them than the acquired profession itself (the direction of training). Here, the authors deliberately limited the choice of respondents to polar options “Graduating from this particular university, it is not so important in which training direction/Graduating from this university, since it has the necessary conditions for training”. It is important to understand the risks of such motivation — in the “pursuit” of a diploma, other important aspects of future professional activity may be missed — the personal significance of the profession, the possibility of subsequent employment, etc. Perhaps such motivation is due to the desire for adaptation in the conditions of limited choice — since few universities in Russia have an accessible environment for students with disabilities, they have to “sacrifice” professional interests.

As for the choice between the “sought-after profession” and the “profession corresponding to individual opportunities” (assertions G), here respondents are more inclined to adapt and will rather choose a more affordable option.

Summing up, the survey revealed two groups of motives among students with disabilities, among whom almost equally positive and negative are observed. Negative ones include the “pragmatism” of respondents, combined with the desire to adapt to existing opportunities. From this, in the authors’ opinion, there is some contradiction — on the one hand, respondents are aimed at obtaining higher education for the purpose of profit and obtaining knowledge, and on the other hand, they choose a university not taking into account “professional” criteria, but based on its accessibility. Although in general, the number of such respondents in the sample is not the majority of respondents, their further competitiveness may be called into question, since this motivation is unlikely to lead to effective self-realization.

These findings are reflected to some extent in the results of interviews conducted with students with disabilities. Some respondents note that they would like to choose not only another profession, but also another university, but their capabilities were limited by infrastructure accessibility, including the problem of traveling to and from the place of study. Basically, these restrictions affect residents of small towns where transport links are poorly developed, limiting the ability to attend the university on their own. Note also that the majority of respondents with disabilities are inclined to choose an inclusive education in the team of “ordinary” peers, this is confirmed both by the results of the interview and the questionnaire.

One can conclude how satisfied students with disabilities are with educational conditions when analyzing the answers of respondents to the situational question “If you had the opportunity to return to the past, would you choose the university in which you are currently studying?” Most students do not regret their choice (50.9%). However, among the respondents, there were those who found it difficult to answer the question (26.4%) or answered negatively (22.2%). Some of the “disappointments” of students with musculoskeletal disorders can be associated with the risks caused by mistakes in professional choice, another with inflated expectations regarding the labor market and fear of employment. In face-to-face interviews with the interviewer, many respondents noted that they did not see a ready career route for themselves and admitted that they were stressed by one thought about graduation. It is confirmed by university teachers that some students are ready to study in several programs in turn, dropping out from the last year, and then re-entering the budget place of another program. The university even has a kind of “stars” that have gained fame for successive deductions more than 5 times. These motives are mainly based on fear of unemployment. Let us quote the words of one of the respondents on this occasion: “After the bachelor’s degree, of course, to the magistracy... my profession is in demand only in large cities, and I am from the province, I will return there — there is nowhere to work, so I can’t get out of the house, there are no ramps, I live on the fifth floor... Then I’ll go to graduate school or drop out... you can re-enter another profession. It’s too early to think about it now” (undergraduate student, 3rd year). Thus, the decision to continue studies in master’s and graduate schools is often based not on educational preferences and interests, but on the desire to “stay at a university”, even in the absence of suitable educational programs.

4. Conclusions

It has already been noted that the social and economic effectiveness of inclusion is quite high, which indicates the undeniable benefits of this strategy. In addition, the introduction of special universities will not solve other problems caused by infrastructure barriers that will inevitably arise in the process of employing people with disabilities, obtaining services, etc. In view of the above, it should be recognized that the availability of higher education in Russia remains a problem for people with disabilities, which can affect their motivation to learn. Although in this direction there is an increase in events (including through the activities of the federal network of resource educational and methodological centers for the education of people with disabilities), universities, apparently, have yet to develop effective inclusion mechanisms.

It is necessary to ensure the continuity of inclusion at different levels of training. It is preferable to work with applicants at the pre-university training stage through the interaction of schools and universities. Such interaction should be aimed at jointly finding a suitable educational trajectory — a middle-level institution can form and subsequently transfer a portfolio to the university, which includes a description of the strengths and problems of the student to select optimal working methods.

In addition, universities need to cooperate with employment centers responsible for the employment of persons with disabilities. The task of interaction with this structure is to build career guidance work in accordance with the needs of an inclusive (protected) labor market, which includes quota jobs for people with disabilities. Also, the employment service in most regions has business project financing programs for start-up entrepreneurs with disabilities. Although the amounts of grants for such projects are relatively small, they can serve as a basis for activity in this direction. At the same time, the university can act as a consultant for a graduate at the design stage. Thus, to increase the educational motivation of students with disabilities, the interaction of a number of stakeholders at different stages, including pre-university training, becomes relevant.

References

- [1] Yarskaia-Smirnova E, Romanov P. Disability higher education: Politics and experience. *Higher Education in Russia*. 2004;7:38–50.
- [2] Bayramov VD, Bonkalo TI, Raidugin DS, Voevodina EV. Methodological approaches to the actualization of professional self-determination in students with disabilities

- in the context of development of inclusive education. *Psychological Science and Education*. 2018;23(2):19–28. <https://doi.org/10.17759/pse.2018230203>
- [3] Voevodina EV. Educational risks in the process of training students with diseases of the musculoskeletal system in higher education organizations. *Sociological Studies*. 2020;6:133–139.
- [4] Osenkova DI, Konovalov IE. Identification of the main risks of the readiness of applicants with limited health opportunities to study in a higher education institution. *Kazan Pedagogical Journal*. 2016;5(112):362–366.
- [5] Mormuzheva NV. Motivation for training students of professional institutions. *Materials of the IV International Scientific Conference: "Pedagogy: Traditions and innovations"*. 2013 Dec 1-31; Chelyabinsk, Russian Federation. Chelyabinsk: Dva Komsomoltsa; 2013 [cited 2021.01.16]. 232 p.
- [6] Primchuk NV. Educational motivation of students and criteria of its changing. *Izvestia: Herzen University Journal of Humanities & Sciences*. 2015;32(11):368–372.