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MORAL MOTIVATION AS PREDICTOR FOR ACTIVITY IN STUDENTS ORGANIZATION

Abstract

Student organizations exist and should exist to protect the rights and interests of their members. If certain research is correct and say that more than 80% of students in Macedonia are not members of any student organization, then the situation is worrying and of course it is necessary to find suitable ways to change it.

Therefore, a research team at the Institute for Sociological, Political and Juridical Research conducted a research on student organization, in particular about the ways in which students work, their attitudes and opinions about student organization, and their motivation to behave in accordance with the concepts of social justice.

In the period of May 2017, 669 students from different faculties at the University “Ss. Cyril and Methodius” were examined about their views and opinions for student organization,

as well as their moral motivation, or whether they are morally motivated to behave in accordance with the principles of social justice in society.

The results show that students do not understand the concept of social justice and are very little aware that with their behavior they contribute to the fight for social justice. This also means that if they are not fully aware about their potential contribution in society they will not be active in the processes of student's life and their future.

Keywords: students organization, moral motivation, social justice, University "Ss. Cyril and Methodius" - Republic of Macedonia, attitude toward students' organization

INTRODUCTION

“An essential distinction in motivation is the distinction between two tendencies: the tendency of approach and the tendency of avoidance; in the motivation of approach, behavior is directed by a positive or desirable event or outcome, while in the motivation for avoidance, behavior is directed by a negative or unwanted event or outcome (Elliot, 1999)” (Sheikh, 2007, p. 3).

“Positive outcomes in the domain of morality are those moral behaviors that an individual should apply, while negative outcomes are immoral behaviors that the individual should not apply. The key to self-regulation is to activate positive, moral behaviors – to do what is moral, despite the inhibition of negative, immoral behaviors – not to do what is immoral. If an individual has self-regulation, then he/she will be motivated to behave morally, and he/she will avoid being immoral (Janoff-Bulman & Sheikh, 2006)” (Sheikh, 2007, p. 6).

The next distinction in motivation is the distinction between the self and the others, more precisely, personal and social responsibility. Individuals who have perceived the concept of responsibility will be able to understand which behavior means personal responsibility, and which social responsibility.

“By combining these two concepts: the concept of self-regulation and the concept of responsibility we come to the 2 x 2 Model of Moral Motivation, which consists of 4 cells that are referred to as: Self-Restraint, Self-Reliance, Social Order, and Social Justice” (Sheikh, 2007, p. 6). “Although all these four motives are present to some degree in the moral system of each individual, the unique socializing history and life experience created a greater focus on one or more motives in each individual” (Sheikh, 2007, p. 7).

Model of moral motivation		Responsibility	
		Personal responsibility	Social responsibility
Self-Regulation	Tendency for avoidance	Self-Restraint	Social Order
	Tendency for approaching	Self-Reliance	Social Justice

Graph no.1 2 x 2 Model of moral motivation (Sheikh, 2007, p.32)

“Self-Restraint and Self-Reliance reflect the differences between the self-regulation orientations of activation and the inhibition in the domain of personal responsibility, whereas Social Order and Social Justice represent these regulatory orientations in the realm of social responsibility” (Sheikh, 2007, p. 6).

“The Social Justice motive involves a very different set of communal obligations involving the motivation to provide for others and to help others in the community advance, and is associated with efforts to insure greater economic and material support, often involving matters of opportunity, income and equity” (Sheikh, 2007, p. 8).

“Moral behavior from a Social Justice perspective is equivalent to contributing to the social welfare of others, and individuals expect to be rewarded for good behavior, but do not expect to be punished in the absence of this behavior. In contrast to the Social Order motive, Social Justice is associated with political liberalism and low scores on right-wing authoritarianism and social dominance (Janoff-Bulman & Sheikh, 2006)” (Sheikh, 2007, p. 9). “Both involve beliefs in social responsibility; however, Social Order is focused primarily on what we should not do and inhibitory behaviors so as to maintain a moral, ordered community, whereas Social Justice focuses primarily on what we should do and activation behaviors in promoting a moral, just society. It was this motive that was the subject of analysis in this research, because we believe that this motive should be associated with students’ activism, or more precisely, students’ attitude toward their organization and representation” (Sheikh, 2007, p. 9).

SOCIAL ATTITUDES

There are many definitions for the term *attitude* in psychology and all of them incorporate certain knowledge, beliefs and opinions, certain (complex) emotions and feelings and certain actions and behaviors toward a particular object (object of the attitude): person, thing or event.

Attitudes are certainly formed during socialization process and they (some of them) can be pretty stable over time, but they (also some of them) can change as a result of some events. A social attitude is defined as “a behavior pattern, anticipatory set or tendency, predisposition to specific adjustment or more simply, a conditioned response to social stimuli (Dockery & Bedeian, 1989, p. 11)” (Chaiklin, 2011).

The structure of every attitude can be explained and understand with three aspects which are included in so called “ABC model of attitudes” (McLeod, 2014). The first aspect is “affective component” and “involves a person’s feelings/emotions about the attitude object”; the second aspect is “behavioral (or conative) component” and includes “the way the attitude we have influences how we act or behave” and the third aspect is “cognitive component”, which “involves a person’s belief/knowledge about an attitude object”. (McLeod, 2014).

If the idea that people are rational beings is accepted, then we can expect people to behave according to their attitudes and all the three aspects to be in the same direction.

Components of the attitude about student organization and representation

The attitude about student organization and representation according to the ABC model, was disassembled into its components, which were actually presented in three subscales: the Cognitive Component (**Cognitive Subscale** = sum of 13 questions about student's information about the activities of the student organization and the leading persons of the organization), the Affective Component (**Affective Subscale** = sum of 4 questions about the student's satisfaction with several aspects of student organizations), and the Behavioral Component (**Behavior Subscale** = sum of 8 questions about the student's involvement in the student's formal organization).

The Cronbach Alpha coefficients for each subscale separately (for the Cognitive subscale = 0.883; for the Behavior subscale = 0.661 and for the Affective subscale = 0.834), as well as the item total correlation of each item of all subscales (all significant at the 0.01 level) indicated that all the subscales can be seen as separate scales with their own sum score.

A descriptive analysis of all subscales demonstrated the following results.

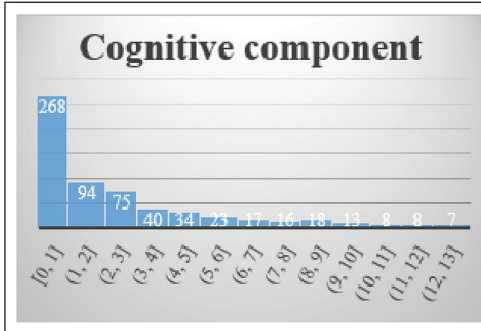
Table no.1 *Descriptive analysis of Cognitive, Behavior and Affective subscales*

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Cognitive Subscale	0	13	2.76	3.076
Behavior Subscale	0	7	.77	1.222
Affective Subscale	4	20	10.42	3.485

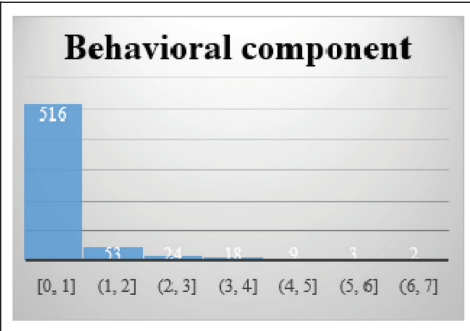
As it can be seen from the table, the theoretical and the obtained range of the scale which presents the cognitive component is from 0 to 13, and M is 2.76; the theoretical and the obtained range of the scale which presents the behavioral component is from 0 to 7, and the arithmetic mean is 0.77; the theoretical and the obtained range of the scale which presents the affective component is from 4 to 20, and the arithmetic mean is 10.42.

A graphic display of the frequencies distribution follows.

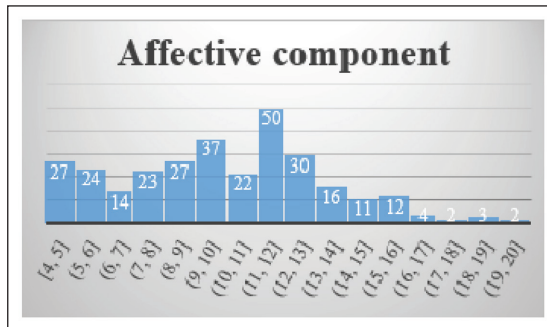
Graph no.2 Score distribution of Cognitive component



Graph no.3 Score distribution of Behavioral component



Graph no.4 Score distribution of Affective component



The data show the unequal distribution of the Cognitive Subscale and, in particular, the uneven distribution of the Behavioral Subscale. The majority of respondents have low scores close to zero on the two presented subscales. Only the affective component has a certain score shifting towards the middle.

The relation of all three components of the students' social attitude toward student organization represented by the coefficient of correlation is presented in the following table.

Table no.2 Correlations among attitude's components

	Cognitive component (subscale)	Behavior component (subscale)	Affective component (subscale)
Cognitive component (subscale)	1	.628**	.385**
Behavior component (subscale)	.628**	1	.178**
Affective component (subscale)	.385**	.178**	1

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

The coefficients speak of a statistically significant positive correlation between all three components. A high score of the cognitive component is paired with a high score of the behavioral component, as well as a high score of the affective component. This result suggests that those students who have greater knowledge and more information about the student organization are more active in the organization, and they have a more positive attitude towards their formal organization.

Student's motive for social justice

The introduction section mentioned that this research used the Subscale for Social Justice Motive as part of Moralism Scale. "Moralism Scale is a 24-item scale that incorporates items representing each of the four cells of the proposed model of moral motivations: Self-Restraint, Self-Reliance, Social Order and Social Justice. Each item consists of a scenario in which the target person decides whether to engage in a particular behavior. Participants are asked to make two types of ratings: first, they rate the extent to which they view the scenario to be a matter of personal preference, from 1 ('*not at all a matter of personal preference*') to 9 ('*completely a matter of personal preference*'). Second, participants rate the extent to which they believe the subject in the scenario should or should not perform the behavior, from 1 ('*feel very strongly he/she should not*') to 9 ('*feel very strongly he/she should*'), where 5 is the midpoint ('*neutral*'). These are called the Moralism Preference subscale and the Moralism Evaluation subscale, respectively" (Sheikh, 2007, p. 15). Since we predict that the motive for social justice is the one in relation with student's activism, we extract only those 6 scenarios which examine what we should do and activation behaviors in promoting a moral, just society.

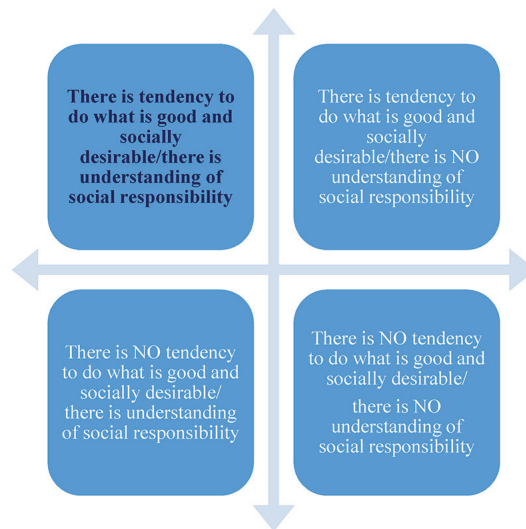
Table no.3 Descriptive analysis of Moralism Preference and Moralism Evaluation subscales

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Moralism Preference -Extent to which a person views the scenario to be a matter of personal preference	6	54	46.16	8.680
Moralism Evaluation -Extent to which they view the scenario to be a matter of personal preference	6	54	38.58	7.699

As it can be seen from the table no.3, the theoretical and the obtained range of the scale which presents the first type of ratings about the matter of personal preference (Moralism Preference) is from 0 to 54, and M is 46.16; the theoretical and the obtained range of the second type of rating (Moralism Evaluation) is from 6 to 54, and the arithmetic mean is 38.58. If theoretical mean is 30, than it can be seen that in both ratings the respondents are above that score, and the first rating (about the extent to which a person views the scenario to be a matter of personal preference) is more extreme.

The Cronbach Alpha coefficient for the first type of ratings (Moralism Preference) was 0.846, and the Cronbach coefficient for the second ratings was 0.701.

This is the graphical presentation of the theoretical model of Social Justice coordinate system.

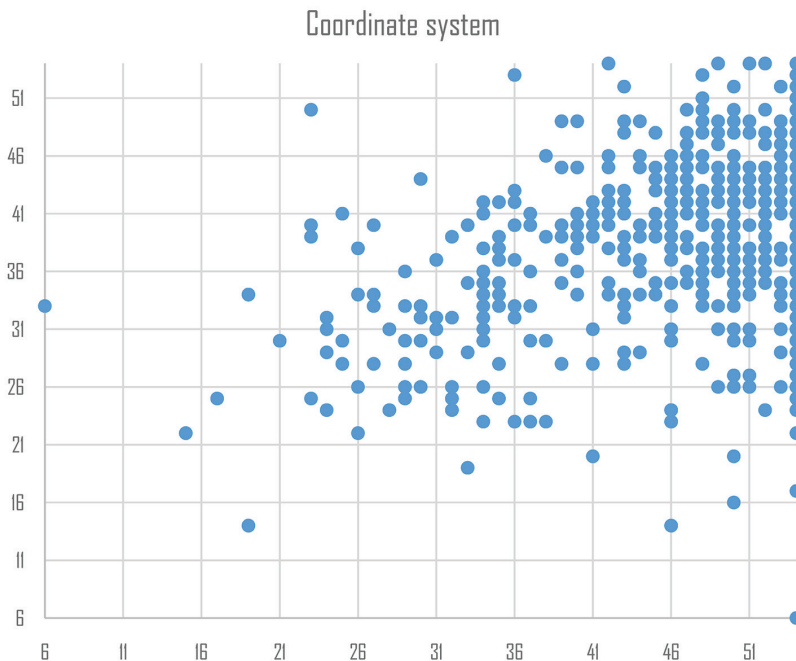


Graph no.5 Graphical presentation of motive for social justice

Since the respondents first rate the extent to which they view the scenario to be a matter of personal preference (from “not at all a matter of personal preference” to “completely a matter of personal preference” (Sheikh, 2007, p. 45-48), the horizontal axis divides the respondents into those on the left side (up and down) who understand the social responsibility and those on the right side of the coordinate system (up and down) who do not understand social responsibility. Afterwards the respondents rate the extent to which they believe the subject in the scenario should or should not perform the behavior, (from “feel very strongly he/

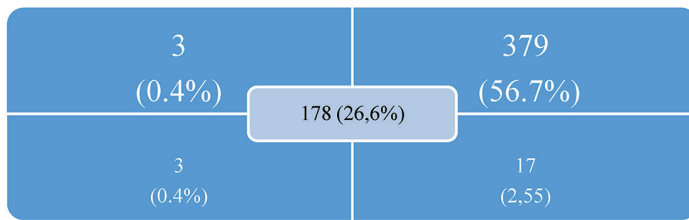
she should not” to “*feel very strongly he/she should*” (Sheikh, 2007, p. 45-48), so that the vertical axis divides the respondents into those who are below (left and right) and who haven’t got a tendency to do what is good and socially desirable and those who are above (left and right) who do have a tendency to do what is good and socially desirable.

According to this coordinate system, the desirable moral motivation is placed on the left upper side, which presents the people who have a tendency to do what is good and socially desirable and they understand the concept of social responsibility (they know that their action affects the other). But where are UKIM students positioned on this coordinate system?



Graph no.6 *Score distribution on Moral Justice subscale*

As can it be seen from this graph, the respondents are grouped in the right upper side, which is the place for those who do have a tendency to do what is good and socially desirable, but they still do not understand the concept of social responsibility, and think that doing things, such as giving charity or helping the old lady in the supermarket, is a matter a personal choice.



Graph no.7 *Frequencies and percentages of respondents in the coordinate system*

Graph no. 7 again presents the fact that majority of students belong in the right upper corner. However, this graph illustrates another important fact that more than a quarter of students are in the neutral zone, zone somewhat in the middle of the coordinate system, zone with no extreme preferences and attitudes.

There was no significant correlation between a student's attitude toward their organization (cognitive, behavioral and affective component/scale) and the Scale for Social Responsibility (Moralism Preference subscale and the Moralism Evaluation subscale), which means that these two variables are not in any kind of relationship. And, expectedly, there was retention of the null hypothesis for these two variables.

CONCLUSION

The data show three main findings: on the motivation scale for social justice UKIM students show that although they have a tendency to behave in a socially desirable and moral way, they still do not adopt the concept of social justice and do not realize that socially desirable behavior does not concern only them; UKIM students have a rudimentary and undeveloped attitude towards such an important topic as social organization. The behavioral component of the attitude is least developed, and thus is the cognitive component; there is no relation between the motive for social justice and students' activism, or more general, students' attitude toward their organization.

The first finding touches upon adults, society, educational systems: schools, universities because the motive for social justice is primarily socially conditioned. Although students tend to behave in a socially desirable and moral way, they still cannot realize that socially desirable behavior does not concern only them, and this is a concept which should be encouraged in childhood by all persons who are in position to be adults, teachers and educators.

Even though the second finding looks like it should primarily concern students themselves, it is still obligation of adults to provide safe environment for students (youth in general) to freely express their potentials.

The third finding logically follows from the research data: there is no variation in dependent variables, such as were the cognitive, behavioral and cognitive component of the attitude, and especially the behavioral component where more than 90 percent of the respondents have score 0 or 1 on that subscale.

The conclusion from these research findings will be as follows: the educational system of the country has to invest in its students because good student organization, in addition to exercising rights, freedoms and needs, and engaging in improving students' standard and their well-being, means investing in an efficient, motivated and democratic youth.

According to all previous experiences around the world, it can be said that one of the basic goals of universities and society in general should be investing in providing a suitable ground for student parliaments to become true temples of democracy, tolerance, understanding, a sense of community and, of course, desire, motive, vision, but also knowledge for a better university as a better educational environment and a better society in general.

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