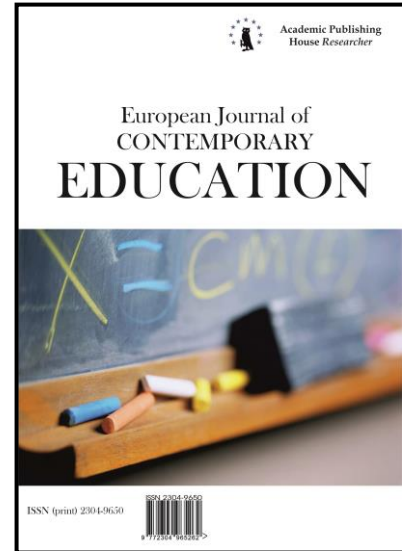




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Published in the Slovak Republic
European Journal of Contemporary Education
E-ISSN 2305-6746
2021. 10(3): 574-582
DOI: 10.13187/ejced.2021.3.574
www.ejournal1.com

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Personal Agency and Social Creativity of Modern Adolescents: Opportunities for the Development in a Socially Enriched Environment

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Abstract

The article reveals the theoretical and practical aspects of the interrelation of social creativity, the demonstration of leadership skills and personal agency of adolescents included in a socially enriched environment of additional education.

The methods of studying the development of adolescents' personal agency are described, which make it possible to identify the level of social creativity of an individual and the aptitude of adolescents for leadership.

The article presents the results of an experimental study of the dynamics of adolescents' personal agency in connection with the changes in the indicators of their social creativity and leadership potential after the implementation of a specially developed additional educational program "Social testing ground". The obtained results are compared to five stages of the development of personal agency such as "observer", "learner", "apprentice", "master", "creator".

A positive growth of the studied parameters among adolescents, the participants of the experiment, has been noted, which allows confirming the conclusion about the systemic nature of personal agency and its interrelation with the creative skills of an individual when interacting with the social environment.

Keywords: personal agency, adolescent, socially enriched environment, additional education of children, social creativity, leadership potential.

1. Introduction

To designate a person's ability to be an active transformer of the reality, the concept of "personal agency" is used. It keeps focus on the important characteristics of a person's identity such as motivation, initiative, self-discipline, reflexivity and realization through interaction with others. Researchers define personal agency as a construct of psychological content that integrally describes the ability of an individual to consciously and voluntarily change himself and the external

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reality (Gorynina, Yusupov, 2020: 39). Personal agency manifests itself most vividly in the moments of crisis in life and is present during most age stages of the development. Although the changes in its specificity occur more easily in adolescence and youth, when the most active formation of a person's identity takes place.

In adolescence, the development of personal agency is mediated by the contradictions of the age, the desire to be an adult, the intention to find significant adults and peers for communication and to socialize actively. At the same time, the accumulation of personal experience by a teenager on the basis of mastering personal positions through the inclusion in a variety of educational activities acts as an internal factor that determines the development of personal agency. In this case, this process is considered as the highest form of the realization of mental activity, and an adolescent being an agent of spontaneous activity masters a new level, the level of an agent of activity (Panov, 2018). External factors are the requirements of the external environment (inner circle, family, educational institutions, informal peer groups) that create the opportunities for the implementation of this agent's experience (Mudrik, 2016). There is an interdependence and interrelation between the external and internal factors, since the implemented agent's experience cannot be realized outside the environment (Vygotsky, 1996), and the environment created with the help of a teacher contributes to the adolescent's acquisition of personal activity experience.

A number of researchers note that a clear indicator of the adolescent's personal agency and the accumulation of agent's experience by him is his ability for social creativity. The phenomenon of "social creativity" in many respects intersects with such psychological phenomena as "social intelligence" and "social giftedness". It gives a teenager an opportunity to form new, non-standard ways of knowing others and creating a system of interpersonal relations. The ability for social creativity is one of the most significant factors in the effectiveness of an adolescent's interaction with people both in interpersonal and intragroup and mass communication (Romanov, Tyurmina, 2003). At the same time, it is quite important that positive environmental conditions are able to unblock the creative abilities of adolescents and make the necessary motivation for their joint creative activity (Pelz, Andrews, 1966).

G. Fischer and his colleagues believe that the main foundation for the manifestation of social creativity is the presence of a difference in the views of the participants of the interaction. In the process of searching for a common position, new ideas, views and communities emerge. A scientist concludes that it is vital to maintain and develop the processes of social creativity for well-being in modern society (Fischer et al., 2005).

A teenager who is able to communicate effectively, adapt to changing conditions of interaction and generate new ideas, may act as a leader of creative interaction in a small group, thereby significantly increasing the effectiveness of its work (Golovanova, 2013).

Not without reason, even in the works of Russian teachers and psychologists of the 1920s such as E.M. Arkin, A.S. Zaluzhny, A.S. Makarenko – the development of the adolescent's leadership qualities, the creation of conditions in which he may show his leadership potential, was considered as one of the important tasks of education. Self-realization in the system of interpersonal interaction is one of the manifestations of personal agency, but the question arises whether those who are able to successfully make joint creative activity must have more or less pronounced leadership qualities or not? There is no definite answer to it.

If we consider personal agency in its internal manifestation, as the ability of a person to form his own system of views, assessments, values and focus on it during his life, realizing himself without the need to control others, then leadership qualities in this case may be absent. According to A.V. Morov, this option allows a person to resist unwanted attempts of the social environment to influence him, thereby letting him remain himself regardless of the external environment. On the contrary, if the full realization of one's own activity is impossible without interaction with other people, then leadership becomes a necessary component of personal agency (Morov, 2014).

The presence of a certain leadership potential in an adolescent may set the diverse realization of his personal agency. Accordingly, this characteristic, as well as the degree of its manifestation, should be taken into account while working with them, since it provides the ability to purposefully influence people and a chance to have a high social status (Krichevsky, 2007).

From our point of view, the personal agency of an adolescent is an integrated characteristic of his personality, manifested in his ability for self-organization and self-realization, creation of effective social communications, social interaction and moral value relationships with others,

aimed at satisfying his activity-related need for peace-building. To a greater extent, personal agency of adolescents develops in a socially enriched environment, an environment of the “social oasis” type, which is present in development centers, children's art houses, summer educational centers, etc. Chernyshev and his students designate the most essential characteristics of such an environment (Chernyshev i dr., 2007). First of all, it is a high level of intensity of joint activity and communication, a positive psychological atmosphere of cooperation and creation, opportunities for participation in various types of activities, a special intensification of communicative, intellectual and behavioral components of life.

We believe that the process of the development of personal agency of modern adolescents will be more efficient, taking into account the development of their various abilities and four components of personal agency:

- socially individual (development of the ability for self-organization, self-knowledge, self-realization and self-determination);
- socio-communicative (development of the ability for social communications, solving intragroup and external socio-communicative situations, etc.);
- socially interactive (development of the ability for social creativity, for leadership in a group);
- socio-moral (development of the ability for social responsibility, for moral and value relationships with subjects of the social environment) (Antopolskaya i dr., 2021).

In this article, we present the results of an experimental study and discuss the development of personal agency of an adolescent at a socially interactive level. So, as, in our opinion, it is in the process of social creativity that the personal agency of an adolescent is most clearly manifested.

2. Materials and methods

Below are the empirical data of the ascertaining and control stage of the experiment, in which the social-interactive level of development of adolescents' personal agency was evaluated. The examinees in the experiment were 54 teenagers aged 13 to 15 years old, attending classes at the development center of additional education "Dialog", Kursk, which implements innovative programs of additional education for children and adults.

It was assumed that as a result of the participation of adolescents in the additional educational program "Social training ground" (2019–2021), both the general level of their personal agency and such social-interactive indicators, such as social creativity and inclination to leadership, would increase.

The study was conducted with the use of these three methods:

- The questionnaire "Evaluation of the stages of personal agency formation" (V.I. Panov et al., modified by T.A. Antopolskaya), allows to identify the degree of personal agency of an adolescent included in the education system and it takes into account five stages of the development of personal agency – "Observer", "Student", "Apprentice", "Master" and "Creator". Each subsequent stage is characterized by an increase in the adolescent's personal experience, while personal agency manifests itself as the possibility of independent planning, design and organization of activities, setting goals and assessing their correctness and effectiveness (Antopolskaya i dr., 2020).

- The methodology "Determination of the social creativity of an individual" (Fetiskin i dr., 2002), allows to assess the adolescent's ability to navigate in interpersonal and group interaction, find non-standard solutions to emerging problems, and implement subject-subject communication with others. The authors distinguish nine levels of the development of this quality, which can be reduced to three main ones: low, medium and high;

- The methodology "Determination of the level of leadership potential" (Fetiskin i dr., 2002), reveals the tendencies of adolescents to leadership. Three degrees of leadership expression within the framework of the norm are diagnosed: weak, medium, strong and the fourth, destructive, as a tendency to dictate.

To assess the degree of reliability of differences between the studied indicators in the ascertaining and control phases of the experiment, we used such a method of mathematical statistics as χ^2 – Pearson's criterion.

In the course of the implementation of the additional educational program "Social training ground", the adolescents took active part in social and creative activities (volunteering, mentoring,

etc.) and mastered its "socially interactive" module. The main topics of the module are: "I can interact", "I can work in a team", "I can resolve conflicts", "I have leadership potential". The adolescents participated in the trainings to meet their need for leadership and the development of social creativity. The content of the trainings included the following topics: "Creativity: pros and cons", "Self-confidence is real", "How to manage your emotions and cope with stress", "I am a leader", etc. The technology of the development of personal agency in socially creative activity was applied to the adolescents of the experimental group (Antopolskaya et al., 2020).

3. Results

The questionnaire "Assessment of the stages of personal agency formation" has made it possible to assess the dynamics of its development in the experimental group at the ascertaining and control stages. Table 1 shows the proportion of the occurrence of each stage among the adolescents in the experimental group.

At the control stage, half of the group (27 people) demonstrated the dominance of the third stage of personal agency: "Apprentice", which is characterized by the ability to full social interaction, but insufficient skills to assess their activity. Thus, recognizing their insufficient independence in terms of assessing the results of social and creative activities.

14 of adolescents have reached the fourth stage of personal agency, which corresponds to a fairly high degree of independence in setting goals for future activities and their planning.

In third place, we mark the stage "Student", which is possessed 8 adolescents. They are most successful in their activities if they are offered a certain standard in advance, on which they can be guided.

The highest stage, "Creator", is observed in only 4 of adolescents. It is characterized by the fact that it makes it possible not only to effectively act on your own, but also to successfully influence others.

The initial stage of personal agency, the "Observer" (1 adolescent), was noted least of all. Here the adolescents experience difficulties with the manifestation of their independent activity, for this they need sufficiently significant external support such as the help of a peer or an adult. A marked tendency towards the manifestation of higher stages of personal agency in our sample is explained by the fact that all adolescents, participating in the research, have been studying in a socially enriched environment of additional education for more than a year.

After the completion of the formative stage, at which the adolescents took part in in the implementation of the "Social testing ground" program, a repeated study of the stages of their personal agency was carried out. As it can be seen from Table 1, there is a noticeable increase in the ability of adolescents to be active on their own. Although some of the tendencies observed earlier remained, the majority of adolescents have the "Apprentice" stage, and the second most common stage is the "Master" stage, the "Creator" stage comes in third place, and then the "Student" stage comes. The "Observer" stage is not marked by anyone at this point.

Table 1. Frequency of occurrence of developmental stages of personal agency among adolescents

Stages	Ascertaining stage	Control stage	χ^2	df
Observer	1	0	1,2	1
Student	8	4	1,41	1
Apprentice	27	24	0.35	1
Master	14	21	2.07	1
Creator	4	5	0.12	1
	$\chi^2=7,08$ df=4			

The frequency of occurrence of the first three stages decreases, while the higher, fourth and fifth stages, on the contrary, increase. All this allows us to speak about the positive effect of experimental influence on the development of personal agency of adolescents. The comparison of the data of the control and ascertaining stages using the Pearson χ^2 test confirmed that the most

noticeable changes at the control stage are associated with an increase in the number of adolescents who have reached the “master” stage, from 14 to 21. Although the comparison of individual stages did not show statistically significant differences, in general, we can talk about a pronounced positive dynamics of the studied trait.

When the level of development of social creativity among adolescents had been initially diagnosed, it turned out that they did not have a low level; an average level had 31 of respondents, a high level 23 adolescents. At the control stage, these indicators changed – the number of adolescents with an average level fell to 19 people, and with a high one rose to 35. Social creativity is an important characteristic of the socially interactive levels of personal agency, it affects the effectiveness of communication and interaction with peers and adults, which can explain the high level of its manifestation at the ascertaining stage of the study.

Comparing the frequency of manifestation of different levels of social creativity among adolescents at different stages of development of personal agency, the following data were obtained (Table 2, there is no low level).

Table 2. Dynamics of the level of development of adolescents’ social creativity at different stages of personal agency

Stages	medium level			high level		
	stages		χ^2 df=1	stages		χ^2 df=1
	Ascertaining	Control		Ascertaining	Control	
Observer	1	0	0,61	0	0	
Student	7	3	0,18	1	1	
Apprentice	14	11	1,03	12	13	0,01
Master	8	3	0,3	7	18	2,17
Creator	1	2	0,01	3	3	

At the ascertaining stage of the study, the average level of social creativity is dominated among the adolescents at the “Observer” and “Student” stages; at the stages of "Apprentice" and "Master", the ratio of its medium and high levels is almost equalized, but the average results predominate somewhat; at the “Creator” stage, most adolescents show a high level of social creativity. In general, with the growth of personal agency, the frequency of occurrence of a high level of social creativity also grows.

At the control stage, the level of personal agency increases and the “Observer” stage does not occur. The average level of social creativity predominates at the “Student” and “Apprentice” stages; at the “Master” and “Creator” stages, most adolescents have a high level of social creativity, and this tendency is most pronounced at the “Master” stage.

On the one hand, we observe a clear interrelation between the development of adolescents' personal agency in general and such an indicator of its socially interactive component as social creativity. On the other hand, even at the maximum stages of personal agency, the presence of not only high, but also medium levels of its development is noted. It is obvious that social creativity is a necessary element of the socially interactive component of personal agency (as evidenced by the complete absence of its low levels in the sample); for the effective implementation of interaction with others, an average level may be sufficient.

Table 3. Dynamics of the leadership potential of adolescents at different stages of personal agency

Stages	weak level			medium level			high level		
	stages		χ^2 df=1	stages		χ^2 df=1	stages		χ^2 df=1
	Ascertaining	Control		Ascertaining	Control		Ascertaining	Control	
Observer	1	0	0,88	0	0		0	0	
Student	4	1	1,44	3	2	0,61	0	1	2,53
Apprentice	18	17	0,11	9	5	0,81	1	2	0,01

Master	8	9	0,31	5	10	3,61	1	2	0,01
Creator	0	0		3	4	0,03	1	1	
	$\chi^2=2,23$ df=3			$\chi^2=7,45$ df=3			$\chi^2=3,0$ df=3		

Then we compared the degree of leadership potential manifestation among adolescents at different stages of personal agency. Since none of them had a “dictate” level, only weak, medium and high levels were taken into account.

At the ascertaining stage, weak levels of leadership potential are dominated among the adolescents at the "Observer" and "Student" stages. At the stages of "Apprentice" and "Master", this tendency remains, but some adolescents also have a high level. The highest stage, the “Creator,” is the only one where the weak level is absent.

At the control stage, the changes in this indicator have been found, but it is rather difficult to consider them unambiguous. On the one hand, the adolescents at the “Student” stage now have an average level of leadership potential, and in addition to a weak one, now there is also a high one. At the “Apprentice” stage, 17 out of 24 schoolchildren retain a weak level, while the average and high level slightly increases. At the “Master” stage, the frequency of the weak level increases slightly, but the number of adolescents with an average level of leadership potential and up to 2 with a high level increased from 5 to 10. At the “Creator” stage, there is still no weak level and the medium level prevails.

If we compare the representation of each of these levels at both stages of the experiment, it turns out that the representation of the weak level has decreased from 31 to 28 people; middle – from 20 rose to 21; high – from three to six teenagers. This allows us to conclude that there is a positive dynamics of this indicator, but its intensity is insignificant, mainly affecting the polar (opposing) levels. Obviously, in the manifestation of the social-interactive level of personal agency, the leadership potential can be considered as a secondary characteristic, whose significance may increase depending on the specific communicative situation.

We have also compared the dynamics of changes in the levels of leadership potential of adolescents and their social creativity during the experiment.

It can be concluded that there is an interrelation between the social creativity of an individual and his propensity for leadership, but at the same time the average level of development of social creativity is noticeably higher than that of leadership potential. Thus, a low level of development of the first indicator in the studied group is generally absent, while a weak leadership potential has been shown by 31 of the adolescents at the ascertaining stage of the study and 27 at the control stage. The average level of social creativity in the course of the experiment began to be recorded less often, from 31 to 19 people, the leadership potential slightly increased, from 20 to 21. The high level of development in the first case was noted initially in 23 schoolchildren and as a result in 35, in the second – initially in three, and after – in six adolescents.

Thus, a similar trend in the dynamics of both qualities is observed, but the initial and final indicators of social creativity are much more pronounced. This may indicate that it manifests itself as a more significant component of personal agency, while leadership potential is a possible, but not an obligatory characteristic of it.

In general, the results indicate that the inclusion of adolescents in the socially enriched environment of additional education contributes to the development of their personal agency and its socially interactive component.

4. Discussion

Discussions of the scientists related to the search for "reference" points in the effective development of personal agency of modern adolescents continue. As our research has shown, the development of social creativity and leadership potential of adolescents is one of their most important areas that ensure the success of this process.

In order for an adolescent to show personal agency in a socio-creative activity, it is necessary at least to have the following conditions: an increased motivation for the implementation of his plan (“I want to do it!”); the possession of the means and methods of this activity for the

implementation of one's plan ("I can do it!"); the mobilization of one's own resources (intellectual, creative and emotional) to achieve the set goal ("I will do it!") (Clarina, 2009).

There is also a rather controversial aspect of the implementation of the process of social creativity, which R. Florida points out. On the one hand, any interaction between people requires a certain level of its organization and the more complex the structure of a particular group, the higher the requirements for organizational issues are. On the other hand, for creativity, excess of regulation and control is often fatal (Florida, 2005). Therefore, when it comes to social creativity that goes beyond interpersonal informal relations, it is necessary to look for a balance that will allow the realization of such social community leaving enough opportunities for joint creativity. As applied to the socially enriched environment of additional education, this conclusion has long been confirmed by pedagogical practice itself – the higher the formalization of the educational process is, the less is the share of creative activity of its participants.

The specificity of additional education lies in its ability to provide an adolescent with a voluntary choice not only of the direction and types of activity, but also the time and pace of mastering educational programs, as well as a teacher as their main initiator. The basic technology in the development of social creativity and leadership potential of adolescents is the creative cooperation of a teacher and an adolescent, where the teacher provides support for independent productive creative activities of students, taking into account the expectations of his family members (Doligusheva, Mavrina, 2015). At the same time, the success of interaction largely depends on the professional and personal qualities of the teacher. M. Orlando identifies the following characteristics of a teacher that need to be shown in working with adolescents:

- respects the adolescent (everyone's ideas and opinions are valued, adolescents feel safe in expressing their feelings, and learn to respect and listen to others);
- creates in the group a sense of community and belonging, makes adolescents understand that they can rely not only on the teacher, but also on the whole group;
- friendly, approachable, caring. Good educators have good listening skills and find time in their busy schedules for those who need them;
- has high hopes for all adolescents, understands that they usually give teachers much less than expected of them;
- constantly renewed as a professional in its quest to provide adolescents with the highest quality education;
- an experienced leader, conveys this sense of leadership to adolescents, giving each of them an opportunity to take on leadership roles;
- constantly collaborates with colleagues, considers cooperation as a way to learn from professional colleagues;
- maintains professionalism in all areas – from appearance to organizational skills and readiness for each day (Orlando, 2013).

For the development of the leadership potential of adolescents, researchers suggest using a set of pedagogical forms: research and creative projects in the mode of mentoring; communication trainings; a system of creative competitions, exhibitions, festivals; master classes, workshops, creative laboratories; scientific and practical conferences. All this, according to M.I. Rozhkov, contributes to the disclosure of the totality of all inclinations and abilities of the individual (communicative, organizational, intellectual and creative), manifested in a situation of interaction in a group and allowing an individual to self-actualize as a leader (Rozhkov, 2015).

Having tested the additional educational program "Social testing ground", our research team has found only insignificant changes in the leadership potential of the adolescents, accompanying the positive dynamics of growth in the level of their personal agency. We assume that this can be explained by the fact that in this variant of joint activity, no emphasis was placed on teamwork. At the same time, it is important for adolescents to gain not only theoretical knowledge about the basics of leadership, but also in practice to demonstrate and work out their abilities in social and creative activities, to accumulate personal experience.

Methodological limitations

The limitations of the sample size do not allow extrapolating the research data to the general population of students in additional education institutions, but apply only to the adolescent schoolchildren of Kursk. In addition, the reliability of the results obtained is somewhat reduced

due to the absence of a control group in this study, which is associated with the objective conditions of the natural experiment being conducted.

5. Conclusion

1. A theoretical review of studies of human personal agency has shown that adolescence is the most susceptible to its development and the development of the ability for social creativity and leadership potential in an adolescent can set the multidimensional realization of his personal agency.

2. The results of the experimental study have confirmed that there is a direct interrelation between the transition of an adolescent to a higher stage of personal agency and the improvement of such indicators of its socially interactive level as social creativity and leadership potential. Consequently, the leader is the actor of activity and communication, but the actor is not necessarily the leader. Nevertheless, the presence of leadership qualities, while not being obligatory for the manifestation of personal agency, provides the possibility of a greater number of ways of its implementation.

3. The use of a set of pedagogical forms and technologies of pedagogical influence allows to achieve a positive growth in the manifestation of adolescents' personal agency both in general and at its socially interactive level.

4. An important condition for the development of personal agency of an adolescent is a teacher's professional position, which ensures creative cooperation between a teacher and an adolescent, where the teacher accompanies his independent productive creative activity.

6. Acknowledgments

This work was supported by the RFBR grant, project No. 20-013-00073-A.

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