

# Increasing Students' Motivation for the Health-Preserving Activities

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**Abstract:** This article studies the measures to increase motivation of the first-year students in terms of health-preserving activity. The study involved first-year students of various specialties of H. S. Skovoroda Kharkiv National Pedagogical University (Ukraine). The study was performed in three stages. At the first stage, we conducted an anonymous test to determine the motivation of future professionals towards health-preserving activity, the results of which has shown, that 46% of students had a low level and did not have a need for health care; they were not motivated to a healthy lifestyle, while having harmful habits, 35% of students had an average level and were willing to take measures to support their health. And only 19% had a higher level of motivation for health-preserving activities. At the second stage in the educational process the formation of sustainable motivation and values to health-preserving activities was provided by non-traditional lectures (problem-solving lectures, lectures-presentations, lectures-discussions, organization of practical and seminar classes using innovative teaching methods, organization of educational activities). As an outcome of conducted activities we arranged an anonymous survey among students, the results of which has shown that the level of students motivated to health-preserving activities has increased. 30% of students had a high level of motivation. The majority of students (48%) had an average level of motivation for health-preserving activities and expressed a desire to be engaged in health activities. Students who had a low level of motivation also reconsidered their habits and began to pay attention towards their own health support. Their number decreased to 22%. This indicates the effectiveness of various measures in the educational process to increase student motivation for health-preserving activities. Such data indicates on the effectiveness of health activities support during the educational and training activities of students.

**Keywords:** *Students; motivation; health-preserving activities; educational process; innovative teaching methods; institution of higher education..*

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## 1. Introduction

Modern fundamental changes in the life of society have led to a trend of deterioration the health of population, including students. Students are one of the most vulnerable population category. Modern education should be aimed at paying a great attention towards students health wellness, the formation of positive encouragement for health-preserving activities. There is a high need today to train future professionals capable of maintaining and strengthening health at different conditions. Realization of this important task is possible only in the presence of high-quality preparation of students, increase of their external and internal motivation and valuable attitude towards own health.

An increase of future professionals motivation towards health-preserving activities in higher education institutions depends on the efforts of the teacher, the entire pedagogical team and the proper educational process organization. Such activities will be effective if students during their studies will have an active life position in relation towards health, learn how to value their health, will strive for a healthy lifestyle. However, the main problem today is the lack of internal and external students motivation, their lack of understanding of the health role in the educational space.

Health is a global problem, as it affects not only human health but the future generations as well. To ensure a high standard of living in the country along with the economics development, it is necessary to pay more attention to the health-preserving activities of students.

## 2. Literature review

Motivation is an important component not only for learning, but also for any human activity. Motivation allows you to achieve the desired results and goals. If there is a motive, then there is a desire to carry out and complete this activity. Many authors have paid attention towards the formation and motivation of students and teachers in various activities. You can often see the close connection between leadership and motivation. Leadership style and motivation are necessary for both students and teachers. If the teacher does not have the desire to achieve the goals, then the student, will follow the teacher and stay passive. Clipa and Grecius (Șerban) (2018), authors of the Romanian higher education institution Ștefan cel Mare University, talk about close connection between leadership and teacher motivation. Such qualities as persistence, devotion, flexibility, self-control, self-discipline and safety of success are defined as for self-assessment motivation productivity.

A significant role is played by the formation of motivation in professional activities, in particular to professional communication with future specialists in pedagogical education. It is known that positive communication is the basis for mental health support. The diagnosis of the initial level of motivation for professional communication was studied (Chagovets et al., 2020).

It is important to pay attention to modern assessment strategies, when using modern teaching methods, which significantly increases the motivation of students to learn, as well as increases individual learning success. This allows a transition from learning assessment to assessment of students' cognitive processes. The more teacher states on importance of objective factors, the higher motivation of students to learn will be (Anghel, 2017). Objective assessment in education is the basis for successful preparation of future teachers for various activities, including health activities.

Health activities are a system of measures and actions aimed at maintaining and improving physical, mental and spiritual health in various conditions.

In the current conditions of a students small motor activity, it is important to build it up. Thus, the authors Damian, Oltean and Damian (2018) of the Romanian Ovidius University Constanta, Faculty of Physical Education and Sport considered the issue of increasing physical activity and its health benefits, recommending moderate physical training for at least 60 minutes a day, three times a week. To ensure such physical activity, students need to increase their motivation to exercise. After all, the most difficult thing for a student aged 17-18 is to start health training and continue to use it systematically in life and during studies.

In Ukraine, much attention is paid to the issue of involving children, school and student youth in physical activity as part of health activities (Shcherbak, 2015), group work and group interaction during practical and seminar classes, which enhances the cognitive activity of future health professionals (Drozhyk, 2017). The problem of the educational environment as the basis of health (Shcherbak & Drozhyk, 2019; Boichuk, 2009), the impact of a healthy lifestyle on student learning (Shcherbak et al., 2019), the importance of motivating students to a healthy lifestyle training life competencies (Strashko et al., 2005), ecological and valeological culture of the future teacher (Boichuk, 2008), motivational and value component of ecological and valeological culture of the future teacher (Boichuk & Mukhina, 2010), formation of ecological and valeological value orientations (Boichuk & Ziomenko, 2004), axiological approach to modern strategy of

preservation of health in modern ecological conditions (Boichuk, 2007), culture of health of students in educational environment of higher educational institution (Boichuk et al., 2015), health competence (Boichuk & Turchynov, 2015) differed in many works.

At H. S. Skovoroda Kharkiv National Pedagogical University and Berdyansk Pedagogical University are actively working at various faculties to form in students a solicitous attitude to their health. Thus, the method of forming health-preserving competencies at students of pedagogical universities was applied (Khatuntseva et al., 2020). The authors have developed criteria (motivational, cognitive-activity, information-communication, reflexive-productive) and levels for assessing the formation of individual components of health competence.

Students form a special social group, which is united by specific conditions of study and life. It is students who do not see their health as a capital that needs to be preserved and multiplied for future generations. Against the background of improving some demographic indicators in recent years (fertility, life expectancy), the incidence of young people is surprising with the continuing deterioration. The productive life of students is different from the work of industrial workers and employees. The student must adapt to a new learning conditions and successfully perform the entire scope of educational and organizational work.

The influence of the teacher on the student is extremely important. In the works of Tsyhanenko (2014) the formation of motivation of a healthy lifestyle of a student through the organization of the educational process according to the model of “competent graduate”, which is aimed at the comprehensive development of personality.

One of the reasons for failures in the classroom, and hence the decline in the quality of educational activities is the lack of motivation of students to learn and study. Therefore, the creation of optimal conditions for the formation of students' motivation to study science is an important task of modern education.

Without proper motivation, no pedagogical technology will work and health-preserving activities will not be effectively implemented, so their implementation requires high interest. That is, not only the teacher, but also students must understand why they are engaged in certain activities and how they will benefit from it. Formation of motivation of educational activity of future teachers in the conditions of the present was considered by Bernvaldt (2011).

To achieve motivation, an experimental program of students' motivation to study has been developed, which provides for: formation of a

system of didactic knowledge and skills on the basis of a differentiated approach to the organization of educational and cognitive activities; work on the development of internal motivation for learning; work on the formation of pedagogical thinking in future teachers; activation of students' cognitive activity and development of their research interests (Dubovytskaia, 2005).

### **3. Materials and Methods**

The study was conducted on the basis of H. S. Skovoroda Kharkiv National Pedagogical University in three stages. At the first stage, an anonymous survey of 250 first-year students (aged 17-18) who studied in the first semester in various specialties was conducted to identify the motivation for the organization of health-preserving activities.

At the second stage, educational and training activities of students in the direction of health care were arranged.

At the third stage, a repeated anonymous survey of students was conducted after the organization of educational activities that was aimed to increase motivation.

To study the level of motivation of students to health-preserving activities, we used questionnaires with questions: "Do you do exercises during leisure time?", "Would you like to take an active part in activities to support physical, mental and spiritual health?", "Do you exercise during training activities?", "Do you consider it is necessary to eat healthy food only?", "Would you like to involve your friends in health care activities in higher education institution and beyond it?", "Is it difficult for you to start health care activities on your own?".

Increasing the motivation of students to health-preserving activities was carried out through the organization of educational activities, which included non-traditional lectures, seminars and practical classes using innovative teaching methods, including training on health issues, various forms of group work with students, classes in the form discussions, press conferences, use of virtual tours during classes, organization and holding of educational university events, etc.

In order to assess the increase of students' motivation for health-preserving activity in the educational process, we determined the levels of assessment of students' motivation for health-preserving. The first is the simplest, lowest level, when the student does not see any sense in health activities, they do not consider it necessary to lead a healthy lifestyle and are careless in terms of their health. The second level – the middle one, when the student feels the need to maintain his health, understands that health is

the highest value in human life, but does not pay relevant attention towards healthy lifestyle, leaving it for later. And, finally, the third (high) level, when the student performs health-preserving activities, treats his health responsibly, has formed values and keeps a healthy lifestyle.

#### **4. Results and Discussion**

An anonymous survey, that we conducted among the first year students; at the beginning of our study we found that 46% of students had low level and did not feel the need for health-preserving activities, they were not motivated for a healthy lifestyle, and even had bad habits; 35 % of students with an average level and were willing to take measures towards their health support. And only 19% had a high level of motivation for health-preserving activities. We can say that most of first-year students when entering a higher education institution have insufficient motivation towards health activities. Therefore, such results encouraged the implementation of health activities during the organization of educational and training activities.

To obtain a positive result at forming the students' motivation for health activities, the age characteristics of students, the level of their intellectual development and the level of previous training in the direction of studying health problems were taken into account. After that, the appropriate information material, teaching methods that would stimulate its assimilation, forms of submission were selected. The most accessible was the health activities material from the students place of residence or study, where certain facts, information, situations on the impact on health were perceived as is personally significant for everyone.

During the educational and training activities establishment in higher education institutions there was an increased influence of the teacher on the process of assimilation of knowledge by students in terms of: preserving and strengthening human health, formation of sustainable motivation, values to their health, need for a healthy lifestyle and focus on the health-preserving activities, formation of skills to apply this knowledge in their further professional activities. All this has to take place in the process of continuity and consistency of skills and knowledge about health forming, where students were active participants.

In the educational process, the formation of sustainable motivation and values towards health activities was provided by non-traditional lectures, namely: problem-solving lectures, lectures-presentations, lectures-discussions, organization of practical and seminar classes with the use of

innovative teaching methods, organization of educational activities. During training and education, an attention was focused towards student's self-awareness stimulation through the development of the needs for knowledge about health, in daily work on yourself, in overcoming bad habits, in self-development, development of personal qualities - discipline, responsibility, demanding to yourself, care, initiative, etc. These qualities and the desire to support health are important elements of personal life purpose and professional activity of the future specialist.

Students' education was effective and fruitful due to the development of motivational motives of their cognitive activity. Such motives were formed in the process of studying health issues in the classroom, processing relevant information in the process of independent work, participating in discussions where students had the opportunity to defend their position on healthy lifestyles, university events dedicated to health, volunteering, which made it possible to compare the theoretical aspects of the studied material with their practical application in their lives.

Reflection was conducted at the end of each lesson or educational event. The following issues were discussed: "What has interested you?", "What did you like?", "Did you have any difficulties?", "What would you like to change?", "Are your needs met?".

Particular attention was paid to the development of introductory lectures for each discipline, because it takes an important place in the formation of positive student motivation. The lecture based on historical aspects of health development, which inevitably influenced the formation of students' responsibility for human health.

For example, during the mastering of the discipline "Health technologies" the motive for further study in this course of technologies on health problems was a lecture-presentation. The purpose of this lecture was to demonstrate the impact of hypodynamics (insufficient motor activity) on human health. Examples of various diseases caused by insufficient motor activity of the person were given.

The logical continuation of the lecture was to prove the urgent need to preserve health, its types (physical, mental, social and spiritual), to reveal possible ways to improve health, to carry out specific health measures, actions, one of which is health-preserving activities.

During the study of the discipline "Fundamentals of Nutrition" motivating effect on students had a problem-solving lecture; at the beginning we provided statistics on the incidence of the population of Ukraine, due to poor nutrition, which caused a lively discussion among students. Students and instructor discussed the reasons for such a

problematic situation in the country, and then put forward various hypotheses to solve this global problem of society. This has stimulated an independent students thinking, contributed to the development of cognitive and professional interests, deep intrinsic motivation for health preservation.

During discipline “Valeology” mastering a seminar-press conference “Theoretical and methodological foundations of physical activity” was held, which allowed to intensify the activities of students, to create favorable conditions for the development of initiative, creativity and self-improvement. Seminar was aimed at opportunity for each student to express the opinion about global and regional health problems and their solutions. The main requirement for student reports was the need to use the acquired health knowledge in their integration. Students prepared presentation reports on the following issues: “What is the health essence of physical activity?”, “How can a specific health problem be solved in several ways?”, “What ensures the normalization of the body?”, “How do you use health activities in preparation for professional activities?” etc.

After this seminar we conducted a survey among students and it has showed us significant changes in their views on the need to preserve health. Students actively participated in the discussion. In order to consolidate the positive result obtained towards motivating students to health-preserving activities, it was proposed to issue a call “Let's save our own health!”. It was offered to get acquainted with previous works of students in this direction, statistical data on separate questions, publications in mass media. A call was chosen due to the fact that it can be used in further professional activities to coordinate health-preserving activities.

During the practical classes, students preferred the group work because of an educational and cognitive activity intensification, development of memory, experience and knowledge actualization, increased responsibility for the work result, skills of consistent presentation of the material improvement.

For example, when mastering the discipline “Fundamentals of Physical Rehabilitation”, when studying the physical rehabilitation of a person with diseases of the cardiovascular system, students were offered situations where they needed to properly organize rehabilitation activities that would improve the overall human condition. For the effective organization of group work, students were split in groups of 3-5 people. Each group received their situation and the material that needed to be processed. Everyone was responsible for a part of the overall task that no one but himself would do. During the group work there was an active discussion, students noted the importance of exercise even in such complex



diseases as myocardial infarction and hypertension. They understood that physical activity, proper nutrition and tempering play an important role in human life. Group communication contributed to the development of students' ability to cooperate, creativity, critical thinking and adequate self-esteem, as well as motivated students towards health preserving activities.

Properly organized work in groups from methodological point of view provided all participants with opportunities to act, practice skills of cooperation, interpersonal communication, contributed to the comprehensive development of students, developed the ability to discuss and solve problems, cultivate responsibility for individual actions and joint results. When working in a group, the individual inevitably puts himself in a position that forces him to self-examination and reflection.

Much of the practical training took place in the form of training. We conducted the following trainings: "Formation of a healthy lifestyle through education", which aimed to introduce modern approaches and technologies for the formation of positive motivation for a healthy lifestyle and prevention of deviant behavior of children and youth through the development of life skills; "People and HIV / AIDS", which aimed to acquaint students of different specialties with the current state of HIV / AIDS in the world and in Ukraine and abroad, to form a tolerant attitude towards HIV-infected people and understanding ways to prevent the spread of HIV and the epidemic; "Prevention of viral diseases", where attention was paid to improving the forms and methods of educational work on the prevention of viral diseases.

Training, as an innovative method of teaching, increases the motivation of students towards health-preserving activities, because the main purpose of this form of education is the formation of students' life competencies, namely competencies that determine psychological well-being (skills of self-awareness and self-assessment, problem analysis and acceptance decisions, defining life goals and programs, stress management skills, skills that form motivations for success and contribute to the hardening of will and competencies that determine physical well-being (skills of nutrition, physical activity and tempering, sanitation, rational work organization and recreation).

During the educational work, which includes conducting curatorial classes with students, guiding conversations, thematic educational activities, stimulating debates were held. For example, during the stimulating debate, the discussion issues were: "Dependence of human health on the environmental situation", "The role of teachers in shaping the health of the younger generation", "Culture of a healthy lifestyle". Relevant debates had a

guiding effect on students in the direction of forming in them the beliefs of the dependence of the teacher's work on their own health, the relevant requirements for the formation of personal qualities in life and career.

Excursions to museums were also organized with students in order to obtain information on preserving and strengthening human health. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the use of virtual tours became very important, during which students had access to high-quality multimedia products, through which the teacher, without leaving the room, can influence the cognitive processes of students and form in them a figurative idea of maintaining human health. Today, multimedia tools allow not only to compensate for the lack of modern visual aids, but also to organize distance learning during the inconvenience caused by today, it can significantly increase the motivation of students towards health-preserving activities. We also used virtual tours during lectures and practical classes to get acquainted with various museum exhibits remotely. In this difficult time, multimedia teaching aids have become a motivational tool in the hands of a high school teacher, which can be used to enhance the educational and cognitive activities of students. Elements of interactivity in combination with information technology change the emotional and intellectual atmosphere of the lesson. Virtual tours can also be used in educational work with students.

Exhibitions of photos and wall newspapers dedicated to the World Health Day on the topic "Students healthy and rational nutrition" were held with students. Applicants prepared reports on this topic, covered and discussed the statistics of population morbidity. They even organized and conducted trainings on proper nutrition and physical fitness.

Valeological actions conduction is actively used in higher educational institutions. This encourages students to think about the fact that the only way for everyone to fight for their health and life is safe behavior and observance of sanitary and moral norms.

Representatives of regional medical and preventive institutions, charity organizations, whose efforts are aimed at the prevention and treatment of diseases, the formation of a healthy lifestyle among student youth, are involved in the organization and conduction of such actions. There are always many guests, including participants of regular seminars of health basics teachers association, students and teachers of valeological departments of various universities of the city, employees of the Kharkiv Regional Health Center, Department of Valeology of Kharkiv National University named after Karazin. Students of gymnasiums, secondary schools, etc. take an active part in holding the valeological actions; local creative groups are involved as well.

In solidarity with HIV- infected people and in order to inform young people about all aspects of HIV / AIDS and encourage a healthy lifestyle of students for the International AIDS Day (December 1), a university-wide valeological action "Healthy Youth - Healthy Nation".

The action has been held for several years in a row at H. S. Skovoroda Kharkiv National Pedagogical University with the assistance of the Department of Human's Health, Rehabilitology and Special Psychology. Not only teachers of the department, but also students of different faculties take an active part in the organization and holding of the action. It has become a good tradition when representatives of regional medical institutions and charity organizations, whose efforts are aimed at the prevention and treatment of HIV / AIDS, also take an active part in the educational event. Participants speeches are always illustrated with videos, which clearly demonstrate the ways of human immunodeficiency virus infection, modern approaches to the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of AIDS, which contributes to the formation of positive motivation of students towards health-preservation. The problem of forming a tolerant attitude towards HIV-infected people needs to be solved as soon as possible, because social labeling violates human rights, isolating them from society, and thus deeply affects their feelings, self-esteem and emotions.

Indeed, valeological action plays an important role in students motivation, it draws the attention of students towards health problems and to some extent contributes to the awareness of the values of a healthy lifestyle, forms a valeological culture of student youth, encourages understanding that caring for their health - this is the most profitable investment in your own future.

It was also effective to conduct an interactive game "Health Technologies" and an educational event "Valeobar", which also helped to increase the motivation of students towards health preservation activities.

Public and cultural-educational work at the university was one of the main factors in the formation of high moral and psychological qualities at future professionals, necessary for selfless and exemplary performance of their professional activities. It allowed to form the personality of future specialists, to develop creative activity in all spheres of life.

After organizing educational and training work in the field of health care, an anonymous survey among students was conducted, the results of which showed that 30% of students had a high level of motivation, which is 11% more than at the first stage of testing. The majority of students (48%) had an average level of motivation for health-preserving activities and expressed a desire to engage in healt-preserving activities, which is 13%

more than after the initial testing. Students who had a low level of motivation have also reconsidered their habits and began to pay attention towards their own health support. Their number decreased to 22%, which is 24% less than after the initial testing. Such data indicates on the effectiveness of health activities support during the educational and training activities of students.

## Conclusions

Thus, as a result of classes and activities there was an increase in students' motivation in terms of health-preserving activities; students realized the value and importance of health and a healthy lifestyle, their social and personal participation in health activities; felt satisfaction with the health-preserving orientation of the educational process at H. S. Skovoroda Kharkiv National Pedagogical University and beyond. This means that regardless of the students specialties, it is necessary to conduct maximum health related work with students and motivate them towards such activities.

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