

Assessment of School and University Environments by High School and College Students

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ABSTRACT

The article considers selected methodological approaches to the study of learning environments, which include socio-psychological, spatially-substantive, pedagogical ("environmental approach in education"), and the ecological-psychological approaches. The author proposes pedagogical typology of learning environments based on the works of J. Korczak, considering the environments in the context of actualization of a personal freedom and activity of pupils and students in these environments. Thus, in this context the author considers dogmatic, career, creative and serene kinds of environment. The author presents the proprietary methodology of vector simulation of the learning environments. The results of empirical research of a qualitative and quantitative assessment of learning environments by high school and college students are considered. Systemic problems in the achievement of the pedagogical effectiveness of the school and university environments, as well as the contradictions of succession between school and university learning environments are revealed. It is found that high school students assess the school environment primarily as a "career", while the junior students mostly perceive the university environment as "dogmatic". Thus, when moving from a school environment to a university environment, a reduction in personal developmental potential of the learning environment was noted in terms of actualization of students' creative freedom and activity. According to students' assessments, personal developmental potential of the university environment is restored in senior students due to their involvement in research and project activities of the university.

Key words: learning environment, school environment, university environment, typology of learning environments, simulating of learning environments, assessment of learning environments, pedagogical effectiveness of learning environments, succession of learning environments.

INTRODUCTION

The problem of the environmental role in personal enhancement is traditional for pedagogical science. It is rooted in the works of its founders, such as A. Komensky, J. Locke, J. Rousseau, J. Pestalozzi, and others. The pedagogical projects, appeared in the first half of the XX century, directly aimed at organizing the developmental learning environments, such as the substantive environment of M. Montessori and the social environment of Korczak. At this time J. Piaget, L. Vygotsky and others present the works giving

theoretical understanding of the psychological and pedagogical role of the environment.

The environmental focus of psychological science (Environmental Psychology) is formed in the middle of the XX century (Proshansky, 1976), where the environment and the person, interacting with it, are considered as an entire system (Heimstra, & McFarling, 1974; Lee, 1976; Russel, & Ward, 1982). James Gibson's "theory of opportunity" (1988) seems to be extremely promising in terms of methodology. Whereas other definitions of the environment use the concepts, such as "terms",

“influences”, and “factors”, Gibson, introducing the category of “capability”, emphasizes the active origin of the agent, mastering his living environment. From the structural and substantial point of view, the learning environment can be considered as “ecological complex” (Duncan, & Schnore, 1969), which includes “population”, “organization”, “space”, and “technology”.

Currently, environmental problems of education are well represented in the research, related to educational issues. However, these studies are typically expounded on a socio-psychological basis rather than ecological (environmental) methodology. The concept of “learning environment” is often replaced by the fuzzy concepts, such as “educational design”, “school atmosphere”, “climate in the class”, “culture of the school”, etc., while the structure of the environment is revealed through physical, psychological, emotional, and socio-cultural descriptors, characterizing particular conditions and resources of the school education. For example, the work of a group of Belgian scientists (Baeten, Kyndt, Struyven, & Dochy, 2010) aims at studying the psychological safety of the learning environment for students in the context of the teachers’ pedagogical strategies. In the work of American scientists C. McKown and Rh. Weinstein (2008), which is positioned as “the study of the learning environment”, the authors explore the effect of pupils’ ethnicity on the attitude of teachers. Urdan T. and E. Schoenfelder (2006), examining the effect of learning environment on students’ motivation, are basically limited to the analysis of the communication process in the study group.

Quite popular comprehensive methodological tool to study the learning environment that is used, in particular, by B. Fraser (Fraser, 2002), is fully focused on socio-psychological aspects of the educational process and does not even purport to be a systematic study of the learning environment. The same can be said about a well-known “Classroom Environment” scale of R. Moos (Moos, 1979).

METHODS

Analysis of current research of the learning

environment allows us to distinguish at least four significantly different methodological avenues:

1. Socio-psychological approach, already mentioned, is the most common one; however, the concept of “learning environment” in the framework of this approach seems to be redundant.
2. Spatially-substantive approach is based on the studies of the Estonian psychology school (Nyt, Heidmets, & Krouwel, 1985), which are devoted to the analysis of the effect of spatial features of the learning environment on students’ conduct. The work of the M. Montessori’s followers, making emphases on pedagogical organization of the child’s substantive environment, can also be attributed to this approach.
3. Environmental approach in the education, according to Yu. Manuilov (2007), has a completely original nature. It systematically examines the learning environment, however, in our view, remains insufficiently elaborated from instrumental and methodological point of view.
4. Ecologically-psychological approach (Kovalev, 1993; & Yasvin, 2000) is systemic in nature, has a broad and successfully proven instrumental and methodological support, and enjoys considerable popularity among Russian scholars and practitioners.

It is the ecologically-psychological approach that has been chosen by us as a methodological framework for assessment of learning environment by pupils and students. Under this approach, the learning environment is understood as a set of influences and conditions of personality formation, confined in terms of space and events, as well as opportunities for its enhancement, arising from the interaction of personality with its social and spatially-substantive environment (Yasvin, 2013).

In this definition, the notion of “capabilities” is of a particular methodological importance as it presupposes the active role of the person (i.e. its subjective position) in the acquisition of educational resources of the environment, as it is equally determined by both the specific properties of the

environment and features of personality. At the same time, “influences” and “conditions” involve the impact of “active” environment upon “passive” person, i.e. predetermine person’s objectal position.

The Typology of Learning Environments And The Methodology Of Their Vector Simulation

Studies of the assessment of learning environment were carried out using the vector simulation method, developed by V. Yasvin (2000) on the basis of Korczak’s typology of “educating environments” (1919). He has distinguished the “dogmatic environment”, the “environment of accomplishment and career”, the “ideological environment”, and the “environment of serene consumption”.

The *dogmatic environment* is characterized by Korczak as an authoritarian environment, dominated by the traditions, rituals, commandments, discipline, order, and conscientiousness. This environment translates clarity, firmness, feelings of the strength and stability, and self-righteousness. Characteristic features include self-containment, self-overcoming, labor, high morals, and prudence coming to passivity. According to Korczak, the individual that is molded in a dogmatic environment is characterized primarily by a high degree of passivity, where calm is transformed into aloofness and apathy. If a man of character has found himself in such an environment, than usually he can be fierce in his desire to resist alien ill-will, directing his energy particularly to any labor activity.

The *environment of accomplishment and career* is characterized by the persistence caused, however, by cold-blooded premeditation, rather than spiritual requirements. In this environment, no one focuses on the completeness of the content; it is enough to adhere to established form, to chant the appropriate slogans and to stand upon ceremony. Here one values tricky self-promotion rather than real dignity of people. Life becomes the sniffing out and schmoozing. This society is dominated by vanity, arrogance, servility, envy, malice, and malevolence. Here one does not like people, just apprising whether he can lose or earn. Basic traits of personality, formed in this environment, are falseness and hypocrisy, “skillful

play” and “accurately-fitting mask”, the pursuit of a career through trickery, bribery, high acquaintanceship, etc.

The *environment of serene consumption* implicates the tranquility, nonchalance, sensitivity, friendliness, and kindness. There is no perseverance; the atmosphere is dominated by intrinsic well-being and lazy, conservative habit, as well as attractive simplicity. Personal enhancement stems from books, conversations, meetings and life experiences. In the serene consumption environment labor never serves any idea, it is not regarded as something settled in life, is not a self fulfilling prophecy, but a means to ensure pleasurable and desirable conditions. According to Korczak, this environment molds a personality, which, in principle, is always happy with what he has. The main traits of such a personality usually include life passivity and inability to fight stress. When facing hardships and obstacles, such a person prefers to eschew from the problems, while continuing to hide in his illusory world.

Finally, the *ideological environment* is characterized by inspiration, impulse, and movement. Here people do not work simply, but happily create and perpetuate talent. There are no dictations and commands - just good will. There are no dogmas - just problems. There is no prudence - just a spiritual flush and enthusiasm. Here sometimes people hate, but never despise scorn. In ideological environment dominates the respect for unconfined thoughts, even if they differ from customary views. This environment forms a personality, which is characterized by activity in development and transformation of the world around, high self-esteem, openness and freedom of his judgments and actions.

To analyze a complicated and multidimensional social reality, such as learning environment, we have used vector, that is, logical-mathematical method of sign functional simulation, in which the admissibility of the inevitable simplifications of the studied reality is determined by the relevant hypothesis, which was laid the basis of concerned model. In the capacity of this hypothesis, we considered the assumption that the learning environment kind is primarily determined

by the conditions and environment capabilities that contribute to the development of the activity (or passivity) of the person, as well as its freedom (or dependency).

The vector simulation methodology involves the construction of a reference frame, consisting of two axes: the axis of "Freedom-Dependency", and the axis of "Activity-Passivity".

To construct the vector, corresponding to a particular kind of learning environment, it is needed to answer six diagnostic questions based on the pedagogical analysis of the concerned environment. Three questions are aimed at determining whether there are opportunities in this environment for free development. Accordingly, other three questions concern the opportunities for development of activity.

The answer to each question allows one to make a point on the relevant scale ("activity" or "passivity", "freedom" or "dependency"). "Activity" is understood as the presence of personality traits, such as initiative, pursuance of something, persistence in this pursuit, the struggle of personality for his interests and defending these interests, etc.; accordingly, the "passivity" is considered as the lack of these attitudes, in other words, the pole of "passivity" on this scale can be considered as "zero activity". "Freedom" is associated with independence of judgment and actions, as well as freedom of choice; and finally, "dependency" is understood as obedience, diligence, and dissimulation.

Diagnostic questions and interpretation of answers For the axis of "Freedom - Dependency".

1. Whose interests and values are mainly dominated in the learning environment?

(a) personality; b) society (group).

Assertion of personal interests and values priority over society interests and values is interpreted as the opportunity for free development, respectively a score is assigned to a "freedom" scale; in case of assertion of the public interests priority, the score is assigned on a scale of "dependency".

2. Who to whom usually adjusts in the course of interaction?

a) teacher to students; b) students to teacher.

If it is noted that in concerned learning environment the situation is dominated where the teacher conforms to students (or, at least, teacher strives for this situation), it is also interpreted as an opportunity for the free development of students, respectively, a score is assigned on a scale of "freedom"; if it is stated that students are constantly forced to conform to their teachers, the score is assigned on a scale of "dependency".

3. What modes of study are mainly carried out in concerned learning environment?

a) individual; b) collective (group).

Orientation of the learning environment on individual modes of study is interpreted as the availability in the environment of additional opportunities for the free development of the self-directed learner, thus a score is assigned on a scale of "freedom"; in the case where teamwork has a priority in the learning environment, a score is assigned on a scale of "dependency".

For the axis of "Activity - Passivity".

4. Whether punishment is practiced in a given learning environment?

a) yes; b) no.

The lack of punishment is seen as a condition conducive to the development of activity, and thus a score is assigned on a scale of "activity"; in case of availability of punishments (used both directly and indirectly) in this learning environment, a score is given on a scale of "passivity".

5. Whether any initiative in this learning environment is encouraged?

a) more often, yes; b) more often, no.

If in this learning environment we can state a presence of positive reinforcement of students' initiatives, then this is interpreted as an additional opportunity to develop students' activity, and a score is assigned on a scale of "activity"; though if taken initiative is usually ignored or may result in various kinds of trouble, then a score is assigned on a scale of "passivity".

6. Whether various creative expressions resonate positively with the concerned learning environment?

a) more often, yes; b) more often, no.

In the case where in the learning environment there are conditions encouraging or valuing creativity, such an environment is seen as contributing to the development of activity, and a

score is assigned on a scale of “activity”; if creative expressions are ignored and remain generally unnoticed and unappreciated, a score is assigned on a scale of “passivity”.

Based on this diagnostics the analyzed learning environment can be attributed to one of four basic kinds: “Dogmatic learning environment” that promotes passivity and dependency; “Career learning environment” that promotes both activity and dependency as well; “Serene learning environment”, conducive to the free development, though contributing also to the formation of passivity; and finally, “Creative learning environment” that encourages free development of active personality.

Based on the answers to the diagnostic questions, corresponding vector, which allows one to assess the learning environment, is constructed in the coordinate system (Fig. 1).

By mathematical modeling we can obtain one of the twelve theoretically possible vectors (three in each of four quadrants of the coordinate system), defining the subtype of the learning environment: “Career environment of dependent activity”, “Typical career environment”, “Career environment of active dependency”; “Dogmatic environment of passive dependency”, “Typical dogmatic environment”, “Dogmatic environment of dependent passivity”; “Serene environment of free passivity”, “Typical serene environment”, “Serene

environment of passive freedom”; “Creative environment of active freedom”, “Typical creative environment”; and “Creative environment of free activity”. In this binary classification of learning environment subtypes, the noun in their title denotes the coordinate axis, which is most close to the environment vector.

The degree of educational resources utilization is shown by a coefficient: firstly, the higher the activity of students, the greater the coefficient. And the secondly, at an equal degree of activity, the coefficient is greater under free activity conditions, and smaller in the context of free passivity.

The Results Of Empirical Investigations Of Assessment Of Learning Environment Modality By High School Pupils And College Students

Assessment of the school environment by the high school students was studied on the basis of 70 secondary schools in Moscow. The total sample of 9 to 11th-grade students amounted to 1465 people.

In the course of ongoing research (Nagornova, & Yasvin, 2005; Yasvin, 2012) the reviews of the universities were given by 812 students from the Moscow State Institute of International Relations (211 people), Moscow City Psychological-Pedagogical University (219 people), Samara State Academy of Architecture and Construction (142 people), and the Samara

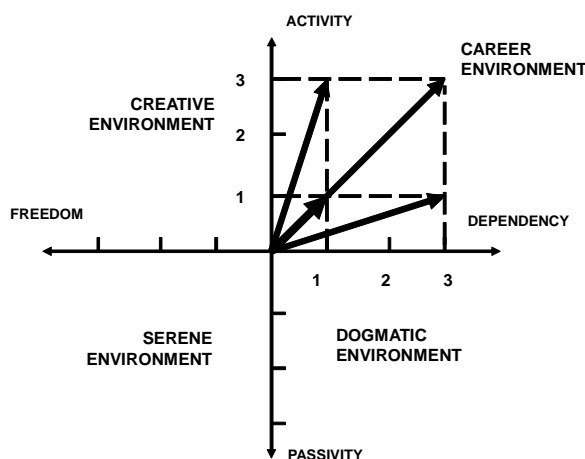


Fig. 1: An example of the possible construction options of a vector model of the environment based on the answers to diagnostic questions

Branch of the Modern Humanitarian Institute (240 people).

Students from Samara, regardless of the year of education and modes of learning (full-time, part-time, distance, budget, and commercial learning), assessed their learning environment as a "typical dogmatic environment" or "dogmatic environment of passive dependency". Just final year students of architectural faculty of the Samara State Academy of Architecture and Construction have assessed the learning environment as a "creative environment of free activity", which is the most productive kind of environment, according to proposed model (Kaptsov, & Kichigin, 2003).

The results of assessments of learning environments by high school and college students are presented in Table 1.

More than half of reviewed high school students (54.2%) rate their school environment as

a career, at that 64% of them perceive it as a "career environment of active dependency". Almost every third high school student (30.8%) believes the school environment dogmatic. More than half of them (56.5%) perceive their learning environment as "dogmatic environment of passive dependency". Only one in ten high school students (10.6%) considers his school environment as creative. Just some high school students (less than 5%) believe that they are studying in a serene school environment. Thus, it can be stated that 85% of assessments given by high school students are related to their feeling of dependency on teachers and other factors of the school environment, limiting their personal freedom. However, two thirds of the assessments of high school students (64.8%) indicate that school environment encourages their activity.

Three out of four surveyed *undergraduate students* (75.5%) perceived university environment as dogmatic. However, about 40% of

Table 1: Assessment of the learning environment (the number of respondents in %)

The kind of environment modality	High school students	The 1 st and 2 nd – year students	The 4 th and 5 th – year students
Career environment	54.2	18.5	41.5
Career environment of dependent activity	9.6	9	15
Typical career environment	9.9	2	4
Career environment of active dependency	34.7	7.5	22.5
Dogmatic environment	30.8	75.5	44.5
Dogmatic environment of passive dependency	17.4	30.5	18.5
Typical dogmatic environment	8.2	16.5	10.5
Dogmatic environment of dependent passivity	5.2	28.5	15.5
Serene environment	4.4	0	2.5
Serene environment of free passivity	1.5	0	1.5
Typical serene environment	0.6	0	0.5
Serene environment of passive freedom	2.8	0	0.5
Creative environment	10.6	6	11.5
Creative environment of active freedom	2.2	4	3.5
Typical creative environment	2.4	0	2.5
Creative environment of free activity	6	2	5.5
System characteristics of the environment			
Activity	64.8	24.5	53.5
Passivity	35.2	75.5	46.5
Freedom	15	6	13.5
Dependency	85	94	86.5

surveyed rated their environment as “dogmatic environment of passive dependency”, whereas the other 40%, on the contrary, assessed the university as “dogmatic environment of dependent passivity”. Almost one fifth of the undergraduate students (18.5%) consider their learning environment to be career one. Only some 1st and 2nd-year students (6%) believe that the educational process in their university flows in a creative environment. None of the surveyed undergraduate students consider university environment to be of a serene kind. Assessments of the university environment are associated with feelings of undergraduate students of their total dependency on teachers (94%) and passive enforcement of their requirements (75.5%).

The perception pattern of university environment by students changes significantly as they approach to senior students. Here less than half of the 4th and 5th –years students (44.5%) refer university environment to the dogmatic kind. In the assessments of the senior students the percentage of the career (41.5%) and creative (11.5%) kind environments significantly increases. Note that more than one-third of senior students, assessing their environment as a career, perceive the university environment, as a “career environment of dependent activity”. Though the assertions associated with a strong dependency on the university environment factors (86.5%) still dominate in the senior students’ assessments, the capabilities of environment, stimulating the activity of senior

students (53.5%), are assessed twice higher compared with assessments of 1st-year students (24.5%).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The empirical results obtained in the course of current studies, allow us, firstly, to analyze the school and university environments in the context of their pedagogical effectiveness in terms of personal development of high school students and the personal and professional development of university students; and secondly, to analyze the problem of pedagogical succession of school and university learning environments.

As already noted, from 85 to 94% of assessments of learning environments by pupils and students are associated with characteristics, contributing to the personal dependency of students on the different teachers’ requirements. Almost all respondent subsamples are characterized by choice of “career environment of active dependency” and “dogmatic environment of passive dependency” as dominant.

At that, complementarity analysis of various pedagogical typologies (Yasvin, 2013) has shown that “career environment of active dependency” promotes the formation of “reflected (reflexly)-experienced personality with activity-elevated manifestations” (according to Lesgaff’s

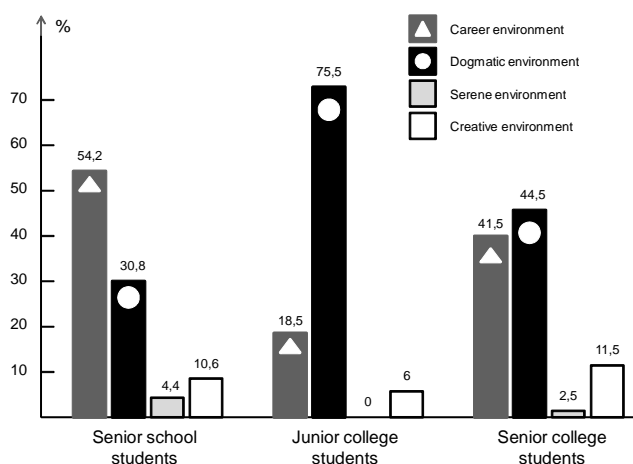


Fig. 2: Assessment of learning environment by high school students, junior and senior college students

terminology), i.e. a kind of personality with a high degree of personal activity and, at the same time, the lack of personal independent behavior, and high dependency of the behavior on the views of relevant others. In turn, the “dogmatic environment of passive dependency” promotes a kind of “imitative-discursive personality with inert-depressed manifestations”.

Lesgaft (1906) described the “reflected (reflexly)-experienced personality with activity-elevated manifestation” as a person who always tries to achieve personal gain through easier way and avoid activities associated with work and diligence. Hypocrisy, flattery, whistle-blowing and groveling toward the teachers is peculiar to this kind of pupils and students. They are rude and boastful toward the messmates of lower status. Such people are prone to petty theft, feigning illness, etc. Almost always they are unloved and alone.

Defining “imitative-discursive personality kind with inert-depressed manifestations”, Lesgaft noted that such students are sluggish for classes and lacking any initiative, trying to avoid any studies. Sometimes they fall into an inert state, in which they do not respond to the requirements, fulfilling them only after the application of the vehement corrective actions.

Their activity is determined solely by external rules and rituals. Gradually they become

more fearful, suspicious, and then vicious, withdrawing into themselves. They are characterized by the angular movements, dumb and restrained reaction to external impressions, the manifestation of soulless ambition and sharp tricks, replacing apathetic life. Personality gradually turns into suspicious dogmatic gimper, who does not allow any reasoning and firmly performing all the given instructions, or an avowed enemy of society, revenging for all the injustices and sufferings that were caused to him.

Obviously, for personal enhancement of pupils, as members of society, and personal and professional development of students, as specialists, the most effective environment kinds are those providing maximum opportunities for self-activity, contributing to the formation of subjective position, i.e. “career environment of dependent activity” and “creative environment of free activity”. Aggregate choice by schoolchildren and college students of these kinds of environments as dominating ones (at least personally for involved respondents) shows that just one in six schoolchildren (15.6%), every fifth senior college student (20.5%), and only one in ten students of 1st and 2nd –year (11%) feel themselves in noted kinds of environments.

It is “career environment of dependent activity” and “creative environment of free activity” that create “rational imitative kind of personality with

Table 2: The results of assessing the parameters of the university environment by junior and senior college students

Environmental parameter	Assessment by the 1st and 2nd-year students (full time tuition)	Assessment by the 3rd and 4th-year students (full time tuition)
Broadness	4.30	4.81
Intensity	5.93	5.40
Perception	4.35	4.46
Generality	2.67	5.53
Emotionality	1.34	1.69
Dominance	5.16	7.00
Coherence	5.24	4.65
Activity	4.96	4.98
Mobility	4.84	8.19
Sustainability	8.86	9.12

activity-increased manifestations”, who, according to Lesgaft, is characterized by the ambition, striving for success and excellence that motivate his work. Typical are the features, such as low-key calm and confidence. This kind of people can consistently and persistently study alone to show off later their knowledge and expertise, while willingly helping classmates. Having chosen the main business, they completely focus on it, subjecting everything to main goal, and engaging also other people.

Obtained empirical data also indicate the problem of succession between school and university environments. Coming from a mostly career school environment to dogmatic environment of the university, young people note the radical strengthening of the factors contributing to their dependency and passivity (Fig. 2).

Analysis of educational conditions has shown that predominantly the dogmatic nature of the university environment in the students' junior years is primarily due to the following features of the organization of their learning activities:

- students take a standard “bachelor” course, i.e. study “basic” subjects, mostly at the theoretical level;
- the majority of subjects are taught mainly in the form of lectures for the entire flow of students;
- the seminars are focused mainly on checking the acquired knowledge, as well as consolidation of material;
- all the work is done only in groups, almost without individual work with students;
- students' activity is focused on learning and reproductive retrieval of material thought;
- for being absent, the lecturer may write a memo to the faculty dean requesting to take relevant measures; besides, the teacher can understate the grade on the exam due to the irregular attendance of classes;
- student initiative is encouraged only within a framework of the subject taught, while discussions on issues not entirely related to the curriculum are not encouraged and not supported by teachers.

The obtained data show a shifting trend in the assessment of the university environment by

college students from the kinds, characterized by dependency and passivity in the first years of education towards the kinds, characterized by dependency and activity in the senior years. This indicates that the organization of the learning environment in the senior years is more conducive to the development of the subjective activity of students, i.e. is more adequate to the tasks of their personal enhancement.

The change in the assessment of the university environment by senior college students is primarily due to the following organizational conditions of their educational activities:

- training courses are organized based on the practice-oriented focus of the chairs; students have the opportunity to choose the graduation chairs according to their scientific and practical interests;
- students are faced with a new form of work; these are case studies and master classes, which aim at learning the students of professional skills, as well as promoting their personal and professional development;
- the proportion of the individual work of each student in the study group increases, the teacher largely adapts to the needs and interests of each student;
- student initiative in various fields is encouraged by the teacher.

Thus, when increasing the level of students' encouragement in terms of their “free activity” in the learning environment, they are largely creating new educational opportunities needed for their personal and professional development, in addition to the use of the resources proposed by the environment.

However, the urgent task of organizing the educational process of senior college students under the creative environment conditions (activity and freedom) still remains practically unsolved.

Expertise and pedagogical designing of effective socio-educational environments at the university is possible based on a variety of quantitative parameters reflecting the level of conditions providing professional and personal

development, as well as availability of evaluative opportunities (Yasvin, 2000).

The broadness of university environment is its structural and substantial characteristic, showing which subjects, objects, processes and phenomena are included into this environment. This parameter consists of eight conceptual blocks: "Classes outside of high school", "Educational travel", "Teachers exchange", "Students exchange", "Broadness of material base", "Visits to cultural institutions", "Visitors", and "Choice of educational microenvironments".

The intensity of the environment is its structural dynamic characteristic, indicating the degree of saturation of the environment by conditions, influences, and developmental opportunities, as well as the focusing ability of their manifestation. This parameter consists of a four conceptual blocks: "Level of requirements to students", "Interactive forms and methods", "Academic load per student", and "Organization of active recreation".

The degree of perception of university environment is an indicator of conscious involvement into this environment of all educational community members. This parameter consists of six conceptual blocks: "Level of awareness about the educational institution", "Symbolics", "Formation of awareness", "Communication with alumni", "Teachers activities", and "Students activities".

The generality of the environment describes the degree of coordination among all members of the educational community. With regard to high school this can be considered as knowledge and the acceptance of common educational objectives, coordination of efforts to achieve them. This parameter consists of five conceptual blocks: "Team of like-minded", "Concept of the university development", "Working forms with the teaching staff", "Involvement of teachers", and "Involvement of students".

The emotionality of the environment characterizes the balance between the emotional and rational components. This parameter consists of four conceptual blocks: "Relationships in the

teaching staff", "Relationships with students", "Relationships with parents", and "Emotionality of designing spatially-substantive environment".

Dominance describes the significance of the university environment in the students' value system. Dominance describes the environment in terms of "important – unimportant" criterion. This is an indicator of the hierarchical status of the environment in relation to other sources of influence on personality. This parameter consists of three conceptual blocks: "Significance for teachers", "Significance for students", and "Significance for parents".

Coherence (consistency) of the environment shows the degree of coherence between the influence of the university environment on the personality and the influences of other factors of the students' habitat. Coherence characterizes the learning environment in terms of "harmonious – disharmonious" criterion. Coherence indicates whether the university environment is isolated from the living environment of students, or they are deeply integrated. This parameter consists of three conceptual blocks: "Consistency with other educational institutions", "Regional integration", and "Broad social integration".

Social activity is an indicator of socially oriented creative potential and expansion of the university environment into the broad social milieu. This parameter consists of four conceptual blocks: "Translation of achievements", "Social significance of graduates", "Communication with mass media", and "Social initiatives".

Mobility of university environment is an indicator of its ability to natural evolutionary changes in the context of the relationships with the habitat. This parameter consists of four conceptual blocks: "Mobility of goals and educational content", "Mobility of methods", "Mobility of educational funds", and "Mobility of staffing".

Sustainability of university environment reflects its stability in time. Whereas the other parameters give a characterization of the environment at a particular point in time, i.e., give its synchronic description, the sustainability

parameter allows one to carry out a diachronic description of the university environment. There is certain dependence between the sustainability of learning environment and the kind of its modality. The most sustainable kind can be assigned to dogmatic environment, while creative environment is the least sustainable.

Selected parameters of the university environment, surely, are to some extent interrelated with each other, though at the same time each of them can have its low or high rate regardless of the level of other parameters.

The study conducted (Nahornova, 2005) has shown significant differences in the assessments of the university environment by junior and senior college students (Table 2).

CONCLUSION

Analysis of quantitative evaluations of the parameters of learning environment has shown that all categories of students most appreciate such parameters as sustainability and mobility, and give lowest assessment to emotionality. Note that the assessments of environment parameters by students are commensurable in general with corresponding estimates of qualified external experts.

There are obvious significant differences in subjective perception of the university environment by junior students (1st and 2nd-year) and senior students (4th and 5th-year). The environmental parameters were higher in assessments of senior students. The only exception was the environment intensity parameter, which was assessed by senior students as less "concentrated" compared to the assessments given by the 1st and 2nd-year students, i.e. they believed that their "educational load" became less than it was in the junior years. Since the review procedure was based on subjective assessment of a wide range of educational (developmental) opportunities of the university environment, the results obtained suggest greater involvement of senior students in all aspects of university life, i.e. their greater subjective activity than that of the junior students.

The proposed set of parameters allows a systematic instructional design of the university environment and offers the opportunity to purposefully carry out its humanitarian expertise, monitor its development, and assess the level of its educational potential in the context of humanitarian values, the most important of which is the high subjective activity of students in the course of their training and education.

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