



THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MOTIVATION AND SOFT SKILLS OF PERSONALITY

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***Abstract** The article examines the psychological relationship between personality motivation and the level of development of soft skills. In modern occupational psychology, soft skills are considered universal meta-competencies of the individual that ensure effective interaction, self-regulation, and organization of activity. However, the presence of well-developed soft skills does not always lead to high performance. It is assumed that one of the key factors determining the realization of soft skills is personality motivation. The study analyzes the relationship between motivation and soft skills, explores the psychological mechanisms of their interaction, and presents the results of an empirical study. It was found that motivation acts as an energetic and directional factor in the realization of soft skills, whereas soft skills function as an instrumental system for the implementation of motivation.*

***Keywords:** motivation, soft skills, meta-competencies, personality, professional effectiveness, self-regulation, communication*

Introduction

In modern personality psychology and occupational psychology, increasing attention is being paid to the study of soft skills. This is due to the fact that in a rapidly changing world, professional success is determined not only by knowledge and technical competencies but also

by the ability to interact with others, adapt to change, regulate behavior, make decisions, and organize activities.

Soft skills represent a system of universal psychological competencies that ensure the effectiveness of activity regardless of the professional domain. These typically include communication skills, emotional intelligence, stress resistance, adaptability, analytical thinking, teamwork ability, leadership, time management, self-regulation, and motivation.

Despite the large number of studies devoted to soft skills, the role of motivation in their realization remains insufficiently explored. Psychological practice shows that the presence of well-developed communication skills, analytical thinking, or leadership qualities does not always lead to high effectiveness. It is often observed that individuals possess strong abilities and skills but fail to demonstrate initiative, avoid responsibility, do not strive for results, and do not realize their potential.

This suggests that soft skills alone do not determine the effectiveness of activity. They represent psychological tools that function only in the presence of motivation.

From a psychological perspective, motivation performs the function of the source of activity. It determines the direction of behavior, the level of effort, persistence, goal selection, and striving for results. Motivation answers the question “why a person acts,” whereas soft skills answer the question “how a person acts.”

Research Design and Methods

In order to study the relationship between personality motivation and the level of development of soft skills, an empirical study was conducted among university students. The sample consisted of 126

students aged 17 to 22 years, including first- to third-year students from various academic disciplines. The sample included 68 males and 58 females.

The study was conducted in a group format in classroom settings. Participants were administered a set of psychodiagnostic methods aimed at assessing motivation and the level of development of soft skills.

The following methods were used

achievement motivation and failure avoidance motivation diagnostics (A.A.Rean), self-regulation behavior questionnaire (V.I Morosanova), diagnostic method of communicative and organizational abilities (V.V.Sinyavsky, B.A.Fedorishin), stress resistance test (Yu.V.Shcherbatykh), author-developed method for assessing the level of soft skills (including communication, leadership, adaptability, time management, analytical thinking, etc.)

As a result of testing, quantitative indicators were obtained for each subject on the following variables: achievement motivation, motivation to avoid failure, communication skills, leadership, self-regulation, stress resistance, time management, adaptability, analytical thinking, creativity and other types of soft skills.

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Statistical analysis included the calculation of mean values, standard deviation, Pearson correlation analysis, group comparisons,

and Student's t-test. Data processing was performed using SPSS software.

Results

Descriptive Statistics

The initial stage involved calculating the mean values of motivation and soft skills indicators.

Table 1. Mean values of indicators (n = 126)

Indicator	Mean	Standard Deviation
Achievement Motivation	67,4	8,2
Failure Avoidance Motivation	41,3	7,5
Communication Skills	71,2	9,1
Leadership	64,8	10,3
Self-regulation	69,5	8,7
Stress Resistance	63,9	9,4
Time Management	66,1	8,9
Adaptability	70,4	7,8
Analytical Thinking	72,3	8,5
Overall Soft Skills Level	69,2	7,6

The results indicate that the overall level of soft skills among students is average to above average, while achievement motivation demonstrates considerable variability.

Correlation Analysis

Next, a correlation analysis was conducted between the level of achievement motivation and soft skill indicators.

Table 2. Correlation between achievement motivation and soft skills

Indicator	r
Communication Skills	0,58
Leadership	0,54
Self-regulation	0,63
Stress Resistance	0,47
Time Management	0,52
Adaptability	0,49
Analytical Thinking	0,44
Overall Soft Skills Level	0,66

All correlation coefficients are statistically significant at $p < 0.01$. The strongest relationships were found between achievement motivation and self-regulation ($r = 0.63$), as well as overall soft skills ($r = 0.66$).

These findings indicate that higher motivation is associated with higher levels of soft skills development.

Group Comparison

Participants were divided into three groups: low, medium, and high motivation.

Table 3. Soft skills level across motivation groups

Motivation Level	Overall Soft Skills
Low	61
Medium	69
High	78

The differences are statistically significant ($t = 3.87$; $p < 0.01$). Students with higher motivation demonstrate significantly higher levels of soft skills.

Key Finding on Performance

Additional analysis of academic performance (GPA and expert teacher evaluation) revealed:

Motivation	Soft Skills	Performance
Low	High	Medium
Low	Low	Low
High	Low	Medium
High	High	High

This indicates that: soft skills alone do not ensure high performance, motivation alone does not ensure high performance, high performance emerges only when both motivation and soft skills are present.

Conclusion

The obtained empirical data significantly refine the understanding of the psychological nature of professional effectiveness and the role of soft skills within it. It has been established that soft skills do not possess independent determining power over performance and cannot be considered an autonomous factor of success. Their functional significance is realized exclusively within the framework of motivational regulation.

Motivation acts as a fundamental energetic and meaning-forming component of activity, ensuring activation, direction, and persistence of behavior. Soft skills, in turn, constitute the operational-instrumental

level of psychological regulation through which motivational potential is realized. In the absence of motivation, even highly developed soft skills remain latent, while insufficient skills limit realization even under high motivational tension.

The identified statistically significant correlations between achievement motivation and key components of soft skills confirm the systemic nature of their interaction. This interaction is not linear but synergistic: motivation and soft skills mutually reinforce each other, forming an integrated regulatory system of activity.

A critical effect identified is the “dual deficit” and “dual resource” phenomenon: low levels of both motivation and soft skills result in minimal performance; the presence of only one component leads to moderate performance; and only their combination produces high effectiveness. This confirms that performance is determined not by the sum, but by the integration of motivational-personal and operational-behavioral characteristics.

From a theoretical perspective, soft skills can be considered a system of meta-competencies functioning in close connection with the motivational-meaning sphere of personality. From a practical standpoint, this implies the need to reconsider approaches to soft skills development: their formation must be accompanied by targeted work on motivation, including the development of achievement motivation, meaning formation, and personal responsibility for results.

In other words, the effectiveness of activity is determined not by what skills a person possesses, but by the extent to which their motivation activates and directs these skills into real behavior.

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