Exploring attitudes towards learning and academic motivational orientations of students in the early stage of their higher education

*Irina Danailova**

I. Background and objectives of the study

In Bulgaria the education is traditionally considered as a highly valued acquisition. The changes in political, social and cultural and economic life is also leading to serious changes in the area of knowledge and learning. A brief overview of the statistics data provided each year by the National Statistical Institute shows alarming trends in the field of education as well. In 2013, the share of the population with higher education degree grew by 2.6% compared to 2009 – the change is from 23% up to 25.6%. The number of students continuing their education in a higher school is growing, albeit at a slow pace. The trend over the last few years however shows another trend - decrease of the number of students in higher education institutions. In the 2014/2015 academic year, the total number of the students in Bulgaria is 2.2% less than in the 2010/2011 academic year and 1.5% less than in the previous academic year. During the 2015/2016 academic year - 4.4% less than in the previous year.

The National Statistical Institute reports that about 32.1% have completed their higher education in 2015. At first sight, this statistic sounds encouraging, but a quick comparative analysis from several European countries reveals extremely interesting facts. Bulgaria is characterized by a low relative share of persons with higher education (in the 30-34 age group) - below 33%. For comparison, the same indicator reaches significantly higher values for Ireland (52.3%), Luxembourg (52.3%), Sweden (50.2%) - countries with much better economic indicators.

If we look at another indicator measuring the effectiveness of the education system - early school leaving - the value for Bulgaria reaches the threshold of 13.4%, a percentage that is still far from the target of 10% set down in the Europe 2020 programme.

Considering the above data, if we add the aging of the population, the declining share of young people and the high migration rates, the forecasts are not at all optimistic. The foregoing is only one side of the problem.

Against the background of the disorientation of values, which has been gaining strength at European level and especially in the context of a crisis of values in Bulgaria, the work with each subsequent cohort of students becomes more and more specific and challenging. Along with the presence of intellectually mature, responsible and inquisitive young people, in every lecture hall, in every group there are students for whom the presence of lectures and exercise is rather an exception, and which are below the most modest academic standards of behavior and learning. This obvious fact is far from being limited only to our University and - on the basis of the experience and the observations we have - it can even be said that this problem in our case is manifested to a comparatively weaker degree. Unfortunately, the higher education institutions funding system in Bulgaria is such that it does not encourage the pursuit of preserving and raising the overall level of education obtained, linking the state subsidy directly with the number of students studying and limiting the opportunities of termination of the students showed substandard academic performance.

Under the conditions set, if lecturers wish their work to be adequate and not formal, they are forced to orient their work in the maturity of student thinking (especially at the entrance after secondary education, i.e. in the first year in the university) It would be useful to have an idea of the values, the interpretative trends and the learning motivation of the young people with whom we work.

The purpose of this survey is to be examined three key characteristics of students:

1. Overall maturity (complexity) of thinking. (Scale 1 to 4) Of particular importance in this case are models of thinking in relation of social perceptions (in terms of people and social relationships); Self-perceptions (self-concept); level of development of a moral consciousness

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(Lawrence Kohlberg).

2. Achieved maturity of attitude towards the higher education, towards the student status and knowledge, obtained at the University. (Scale 1 to 4) Here the highlights are also three: Attitude to the role and place of the University and training; understanding of the lecturer's function in the learning process; understanding of the sense and significance of the assessments achieved.

3. Motivation - there are several parameters:

- Amotivation i.e. the reason for admission to the University is rather related to the reluctance to working, to the hedonistic attitude to life during the university education or to some form of social inertia. (AM)

- The main attitude at admission to the University and attending classes is that they are expression of competitive success compared to others ("successful" motivational orientation according to McClelland) and are independent of the knowledge and/or diploma itself. Becoming a student, then being a good student is a striving determined by a desire for competitive success (abstract ambition). (NA)

- Motivational priority of the "general behavioral discipline" type; i.e. consciousness of everything that is done, whether it is appreciated as interesting and useful or not. Some kind a passive conformism against the expectations of others (for example, parents). (SD)

- The aim of admission to a university is to obtain a diploma. Just and only a diploma, a document without emphasizing the importance of this document for the future incomes or social status. Or diploma, but considered as instrumental - as a factor for more future income or higher status. In both cases, knowledge is irrelevant or markedly secondary. (FI)

- The knowledge obtained at the University will lead to success - in his career and in the society. (KI)

- Common curiosity about the world and everything happening. The reason for admission to the University and a main motivational orientation in academic performances is the love of knowledge at all. (CG)

- The reason for admission to the University and the urge for expressions in it is the acquisition of knowledge from certain scientific fields (reflecting the social and economic specifics of our University), which are important and interesting in themselves, not so because of their relationship with the diploma and the success in the life in the future.

(CS)

The subject of the study is students who are trained in the first year. The main limitation that researchers had to consider with is the practical impossibility of the survey to cover 100% of the enrolled students.

Subject of the study is key characteristics of students - the maturity of thinking, maturity in attitudes towards learning and the motivational orientations.

Purpose of the survey is, on the basis of the questionnaire investigation, is to study the relationship /and the impact/ of maturity of students (measured by the dimensions of overall personal maturity and maturity in the attitude towards learning) and their motivational orientations.

To achieve this goal the following **research tasks** have been solved:

1. Exploring the concepts related to the personal maturity and motivational orientations

2. Exploration of relations and dependencies between the two studied values.

The questions about the place of education and its significance in the life of man, as well as in more generally - its influence in forming the values priorities of our national and regional cultures on the interpretations of "success", "benefits", etc., are extremely complex. However, the following hypotheses can be formulated in in the most generalized order.

Hypothesis 1: If the level of maturity of the students is high, then the motivational orientation reflected in the attitude towards learning will be intrinsic[1] (demonstrated in attraction to knowledge as such, in the presence of cognitive interest in a certain matter, in responsibility, in performance and discipline regardless of the activity; in the striving to success (competitiveness) regardless of activity, sense of achievement)

Hypothesis 2: If the maturity level of the students is low, then the motivational orientation will be extrinsic (expressed in the assessment of the diploma itself as a factor for desirable social status and for higher future incomes, will be expressed in an assessment of the significance of knowledge as a factor for achieving higher incomes, in the availability of assessment of the importance of knowledge as a factor for achieving a certain status).

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[1] If we use in slightly different terms the term originally introduced by McClelland in a slightly different sense plan

Hypothesis 3: If the level of maturity of the students is low, then the motivational orientation will be amotivation (expressed in following the traditions and expectations of the family; inertia, vanity, self-perception of affiliation to the certain social layer, an opportunity for a pleasant life)

For the purposes of the survey, a questionnaire was developed which contains six dimensions concerning maturity (overall and attitudes towards learning) and eleven motivational orientations. The overall maturity and complexity of thinking is measured on a scale of 1 to 4. As has already been pointed out of particular importance in this case are models of thinking in relation of social perceptions (in terms of people and social relationships); Self-perceptions (self-concept); stage of development of a moral conscience (Lawrence Kohlberg). Achieved maturity of attitude towards the higher education, towards the student status and knowledge, obtained at the University also is measured on a scale of 1 to 4. Here the highlights are also three: Attitude to the role and place of the University and training; understanding of the lecturer's function in the learning process; understanding of the sense and significance of the assessments achieved. Motivational orientations encompass intrinsic, extrinsic motivation and amotivation.

QUESTIONNAIRE

The questionnaire consists of 6 areas, each of them – with 4 possible positions. Read them and choose <u>one</u> of these 4 positions for each area (the one you like the most).

I.
ĈB I may be young, but in general things of life are clear to me.
ČB There are life truths of which one should be guided, no matter what someone philosophize on these topics (such as what is typical for the men and what - for the women, what distinguishes the old people from the young, what are the relations between the chief and the subordinate)
ĊB It is difficult for people to be unequivocally described as "good" and "bad" and the ideas - as wholly correct or totally wrong; and beauty, and kindness, and correctness are relative concepts.
ÇB Any problem or situation should be discussed by many different points of view; the truth is never simple.

II.
1. I feel myself unique and extremely capable, whether others have noticed it. OR: I think I have not achieved anything special, I have not established myself as a person, and in social terms I am "no one".
2. It is important to me to feel accepted and influential in the groups that are important to me (friends, colleagues, etc.)
3. It is important that one does not to introspect solely with what is happening at the moment, but rather looks at things in a longer-term life perspective. It seems to me important that one seeks to achieve significant things in his life and develops him/herself.
4. Every person represents a complex Individuality, and people cannot be compared as complex personalities, but only by certain indicators.

III.
1. Man lives only once and there is nothing terrible in that to being violated norms and limitations if I want so or if I have the benefit of this. The position of a man in a given group depends on how he/she competitive is and how he/she has succeeded to impose his opinion on others.others.
2. Generally, people of my age are more sympathetic than older people.
3. It seems that the most important thing in the relationship between people is compromise and mutual responsibility.
4. Generally, people are worthy and sympathetic, regardless of the exceptions and the profession or the success in his/her life. If someone is different from me, it does not mean that he/she is worse or less worthy; people are incredibly diverse and that's nice. Justice is the guiding principle of every society.

IV.
1.   Being a student is annoying, but it seems important with a view to the future. The essentials for me is the diploma I will take when I complete my education, honestly, I do not believe that what I have to learn is of particular value.
2.   The University is a place that provides knowledge that can be useful for finding a job and for the future as whole.
3.   The main goal of university education is to help you to grow up as a person and to develop your abilities.
4.   The intellectual and emotional growth of a person continues throughout life and the University is one of the steps in this growth.

V.
1.   Lecturers are people whose job it is to command, evaluate and control.
2.   Lecturers are people with expert knowledge who point out facts and have the answers to important questions and can decide whether or not you understand the material.
3.   The lecturer is authoritative when possessing knowledge and demonstrating competence and high standards; he/she is the person who assists the learning process mainly through provocation and exchange of ideas and through the demonstration of patterns of thinking.
4.   Every lecturer and discipline is a potentially valuable resource, but it depends on me to what extent I will benefit from it.

VI.
Ĉв After all, to what degree he/she has mastered knowledge is a complicated question, the essential matter is the assessments you have achieved.
Čв The assessments are important because they may be important for future work, as they are, in essence, a reward for the efforts and abilities.
Ċв The assessments are a measure of how much you have mastered a discipline, but they do not always reflect the amount of what you have learned - in some courses you can learn a lot, even and finally not be obtained high score.
Çв The assessments are a measure of how my performance looks in a certain area in the eyes of a given lecturer at a specific point in time, and this is only part of the big picture of my learning in the University.

Below you see 11 statements. Read them and choose the 3 of them you like the most.
1.   , The important thing for me is to get my diploma, and as far as the things that make me learn here, I do not believe it is particularly useful and/or interesting" (FI).
2.   , For my self-esteem, it is good to see myself as a student rather than as an worker or employee without higher education" (AM).
3.   , I am attracted/it is interestingly to me when it comes to economy/society/finance/people, etc. for some of the areas studied here" (CS).
4.   , I am accustomed to prove myself (in principle, or by defeating others), no matter what the activity in question, including during my higher education." (NA).
5.   , The diploma itself has its meaning, but more importantly what I will learn at the university" (CG).
6.   , Somehow I was predetermined to study here because my family was learning such things/ It seems natural that after secondary education to go on to higher education (in any higher education institution or specialty)" (AM).
7.   , The diploma, as a document, opens up the doors for more desirable positions in society or helps to employ myself at more remunerated jobs" (FI).
8.   , In these few years I have freedom, I have a chance to communicate with many people of my age

II. Theoretical-methodological and methodical bases of the analysis

After Jean Piaget, Erikson's conceptions of psychosocial crisis phases, the stages of self-development developed by Jane Levenger, and the phases in the development of the moral consciousness of Lawrence Kohlberg, enjoy a particularly welcoming acceptance into modern psychology of personal development.

Stepping on the Erikson's conception, Jane Levenger raises an important and interesting (especially with respect to this research) aspect of the dynamics of personal development: the change in attitudes towards knowledge and learning. In general, the stages in this sphere, through which it passes - entirely or only to some extent - are four and have been considered with in the more general context of certain common life attitudes)

- *Opportunism*. In life dominate: the self-defense instinct; the attitude to compete and blaming the others; way of thinking, using the most general terms and within vaguely formulated concepts; modest (incomplete and/or inaccurate) self-awareness; breaking the rules with the hope of personal gain. Higher education is the thing that naturally follows after secondary education. It's boring, but it is important. Lecturers are people responsible for the training courses, that show what must to be done and have control functions. The assessments are what matters, rather what has been learned.

- *Social orientation*. The common life attitude is now more closely related to belonging to somewhere and being well accepted; the attitude towards people is friendly as a rule; stereotypes and clichés are a very important support for way of thinking and the behavior. The attitude towards education begins to change: Higher education institution is a place that provides knowledge that can be useful for finding a job and for the future as whole. Lecturers are the experts who provide the facts and the answers. They say whether you understand or do not understand the material that is being taught. The assessments are important to the extent that the success be important for future work, and to the extent that they are a reward for the efforts and abilities.

- *Target orientation*. The long-term prospects in the life choices are emerging and confirmed; the achieving becomes extremely important; In interpersonal relationships the emphasis is often on mutual responsibility. The complexity of thinking is considerably greater; self-assessment standards have been built; the understanding of My own self and this one of others is greater. The main purpose of the higher education institution seems to help you to grow up as a person, to develop your potential abilities, and to better understand your life. The lecturer's knowledge, him/her competence and standards of perfection give him/her an authority. He/she can help in learning, in particular, with the process of exchange of ideas and by demonstrating how to understanding the complex matter. Assessments are essential as a measure of the extent to which one discipline is mastered. They do not always accurately reflect the amount of knowledge. In some courses you can learn a lot, even and finally not be obtained high score.

- *Self-determination and relativism*. The attitude toward the life is focused on individuality and the idea of self-realization. An increasingly important role is played by the concept of justice and humanity. Autonomy in relations is assessed higher; The tolerance to the other person also is higher. Thinking is maximum complex; multiple points of view are used to understanding a given object. It is lives with constant attempts to resolve internal conflicts that have arising from diverse and contradictory duties, needs, roles. Higher education institution is considered as an important step in the process of intellectual and emotional growth that lasts a lifetime. Lecturers are considered as a potentially valuable resource from which something meaningful can be extracted. It comes to the realization that after all, I myself am responsible for how much and how I learn. Assessments are a measure of performance in the classes. Their primary role is to give information about what the student's performance looks like in the lecturer's eyes, and this is only part of the whole process.

Turning attention to the attitude toward the learning and knowledge, there is no way to ignore the impact of the social environment. Learning, as its function, is addressed in the Social-Cognitive Theory, according to which "By interacting with others, people learn knowledge, skills, strategies, beliefs, rules, and attitudes. Through their observations and interactions with others, individuals also learn about the appropriateness, usefulness, and consequences of behaviors.

In this respect the ideas of Albert Bandura are interesting, who makes the connection between motivation and learning. He has differentiates three

main types of factors - social, behavioral and personal factors and defines them as the cause and consequence of a certain behavior. The benefit of Social-Cognitive Theory in relation to learning and motivational orientations can be sought in the usage of the personal example and for encouraging of desirable behavior as well as the prevention of the amotivation.

Obviously, an alternative (or rather complementary) discourse that would be useful for the research purposes when analyzing the academic behavior is the motivational one.

It could be realized in multiple directions, utilizing the directions of research searches in this so wide area, but in modern approaches among the researchers, as if gaining popularity the so-called "Theory of self-determination". And namely within the framework of this theoretical paradigm, recently has been working on the issue of measurement of academic motivation and mainly by the instrument called AMS - "Academic motivation scale".

In order to refine the terminology and overcome the overly ambitious sound of the term "motives", in this statement has been introduced the concept of motivational orientation. This is a "characteristic of the Individual personality, which shows the trend to pay more attention to some of his/her wishes at the expense of others."

Motivational orientations can be (and they are in fact such) influenced by too many factors - individual characteristics, social and cultural environment, traditions in the field of learning and the attitude of society to learning and training, the state policy, values, and other.

On the basis of the well-known and studied motivation theory of Expectations and Valence of Victor Vroom, early in 60s of last century Lyman Porter and Edward E. Lawler were introduced the concepts of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation - concepts exploited and popularized in the works of one of the patriarchs of the motivational researches - David McClelland, who divides the motives into two major groups:

- *intrinsic motivation (IM)* - describes motivation stimulus and supporting and guiding the behavior mechanisms that are rather internal (not necessarily conscious) and mainly associated with spontaneous satisfaction with the activity itself - both as its own content and as social-group measurements and consequences .

- *extrinsic motivation (EM) -* suggesting links between activity and expectations for its consequences in a social-group context - such as remuneration - so the satisfaction comes rather from these expected outcomes rather than from activity itself. It includes everything that can be described as a stimulus to action. Behavior is influenced by some external for the person factors or internal stimulus. Here can be attributed both the success as well as the achieving motivation by McClelland, the last levels of the Maslow's hierarchy of needs, as well as the simple dependence effort - outcome. The main postulate is that people have a reason to behave in a certain way and to maintain a certain behavior.

The concept of motivation is enriched with one more condition in which a person is not motivated by any stimulus, has not some personal satisfaction by doing an activity, but just acting "by inertia". This is the so-called amotivation condition. This type of behavior is related to following the patterns or simply "going with the tide".

On this basis is developing also the concept of cognitive evaluation[2], exploiting the impact of intrinsic on the extrinsic motivation. Despite the series of fruitful and useful researches conducted within CET, It turns out that simple dichotomy intrinsic - extrinsic motivation is difficult to be applied in a real organizational environment, and there is a need for differentiation and specifying the extrinsic factors. This task is solved by the subsequent Self-Determination Theory[3], which distinguishes the extrinsic factors by degree of autonomy (the intrinsic motivation is entirely autonomous). This theory has been experimented in the field of learning and training and currently it is the most widely used motivational pattern in areas such as medicine, sports and education.

The self-determination theory is a very ambitious model by with which the authors Deci and Ryan attempt to facilitate the study and understanding of human behavior.

This explanatory structure of the STD is used intensively as a theoretical and methodological basis for many motivational researches in the field of education, primarily as a conceptual basis of the above-mentioned one.

Determining of driving forces regulating the behavior of the students could assist to choose of different approaches to increase the motivation. For example, if the extrinsic motivation orientation prevails, efforts must be concentrated in to internalization, transformation of the external

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[2] CET - Cognitive Evaluation Theory
[3] SDT – Self-Determination Theory

stimulus into Internal motives. If the intrinsic motivational orientation prevails, the emphasis should be placed on providing of support and developing the potential, in the developing attitudes towards learning. In the presence of amotivation, the approach must be much more complex and thorough.

The academic motivation orientations are an extremely important element in the lives of people who are engaged in education and training. The researching and knowledge them can help the work of the lecturers, as well as everyone engaged in the field.

III. Results and conclusions of the study

The study covered 974 students, training in the first year at the University of National and World Economy: 17.9% of them combine work and training, 82.1% are engaged only with learning.
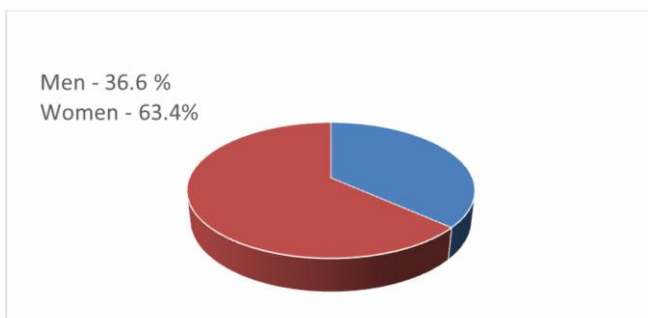
Fig. 1. Structure of survey

The subsequent exposition aims to provide a detailed and comprehensive analysis of the questionnaire survey, following the structure of the questionnaire.

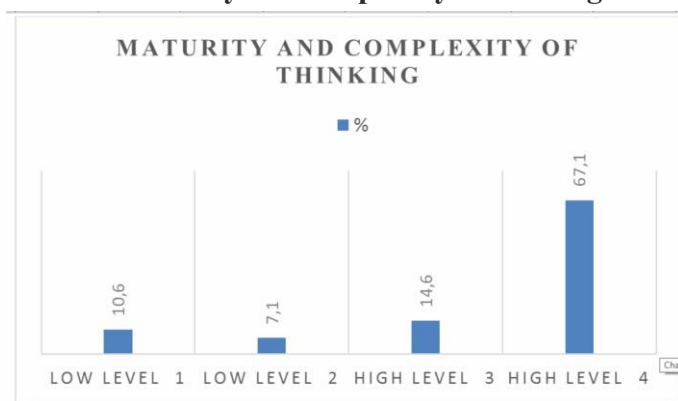### 1. Maturity and complexity of thinking

Fig. 2. Maturity and complexity of thinking

The first box of four statements in the questionnaire refers to the dimension "maturity and complexity of thinking". The maturity and complexity of the thinking of the studied population can be assessed as high (despite the funny element that about 10% of the students think that even though they are young, things in life are clear to them). About 80% of the students show levels above the average level of complexity of thinking. The results show that 67.1% of the students support the position that every problem should be seen from multiple perspectives. An interesting fact is that there was not found some dependence between this type of maturity and the amotivation. This is quite indicative of the impact of culture on the motivation for learning. Building a more complex and accurate view of the world is not related to the understanding that education is a means for a better, meaningful and satisfying life. The examples that prove the opposite one, in political, social and cultural life, are too many and quite indicative.
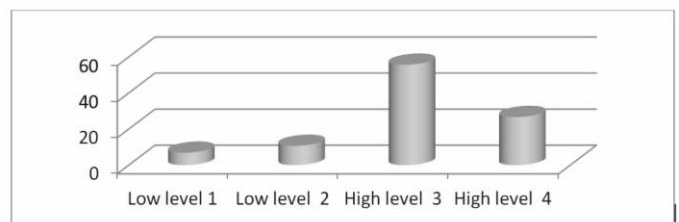

Fig. 3. Maturity of the self-perception

The second box in the questionnaire concerns the dimension "maturity of the self-perception". More than half of the students /55.5%/ show a high maturity /but not the highest of 4 level/ in relation on self-perception - i.e. take into account the need to use a long-term perspective and the necessity for development. A relatively small proportion of the surveyed individuals - 26.7% - show the highest level of maturity. They realize that a person is a complex individuality, and the accurate assessment of their qualities can only be done by comparing certain indicators. Approximately ¼ of the respondents are at the lowest level in this respect. This is a direct indicator of value uncertainty and clearly indicates that the abdication of the secondary school from its educational functions also affects on the subsequent educational levels. Perhaps it should not be forgotten that the lecturer, both in the secondary school and in higher education institution, has both direct nourishing functions (responsibilities in relation to those matters that have ethical dimensions) and also indirect, related

to the personal example, with patterns of thought and behavior demonstrated.

It is better to be noted that there no correlation has been observed between this studied feature and the amoivation. The availability of a high maturity of self-perception does not have a significant impact on the willingness/or unwillingness/ for learning.
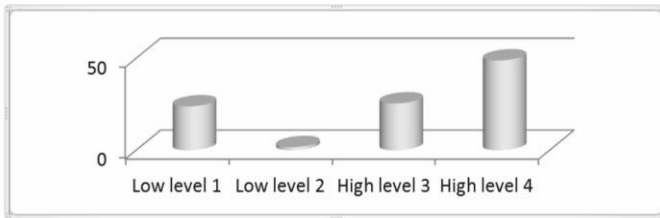

Fig. 4. Level of development of a moral consciousness

The third segment of the survey refers to the the characteristic "Level of development of a moral consciousness". 48.9% of the respondents show a high level of moral consciousness (the highest level of the 4 point scale) - these students expressed the opinion that being different does not mean that you are worse or less worthy. At this stage, justice is important and is defined as "a guiding principle for every society".

It is worrying that approximately ¼ (23.9%) of students surveyed do not see anything wrong in breaking the norms and limitations if they have benefit of this. Again, the cultural peculiarities have a powerful influence. In this statement, there is clearly highlighted particularism, expressed in the striving of compliance of rules when it is advantageous and to circumventing them at any point in which this is beneficial to the individual (Trompenaars F., Ch. Hampden, 2004)

The listed dimensions /first three segments of the questionnaire/ - social perceptions, self-perceptions and moral consciousness - form the so-called overall maturity of thinking.

Fig. 5. Overall maturity and complexity of thinking

If we divide the overall maturity (OZ) into three levels - high, medium and low, the data analysis shows that the majority part of the students have a high level of the overall maturity of 56.4%; 33.6% - medium level. A relatively small part of the respondents have low level - 10.1%. (Figure No. 5).

2. Level of maturity in the attitude towards the learning and knowledge
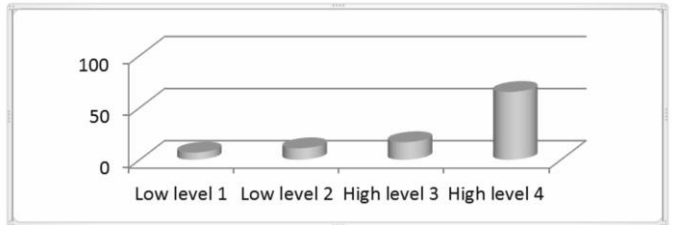

Fig. 6. Dimension "maturity in attitude towards the University and training"

The fourth box in the questionnaire refers to the dimension "maturity in attitude towards the University and training". 2/3 of the students are at the highest, fourth level - 65.2%, as realizing that man grows up all his/her life and the university is a step in the personal growth. Only 6.9% think that being a student is annoying, but it seems important with a view to the future. According to them, only the diploma matters because the knowledge that is obtained at the university is of dubious practical application. The interpretations of the role and meaning of the exams' assessments demonstrate significantly more immature way of thinking (over 80% of the students are at a level below the maximum one, which means - for example - that the assessments are given more importance than it should, at the expense of the value of what it has learned.
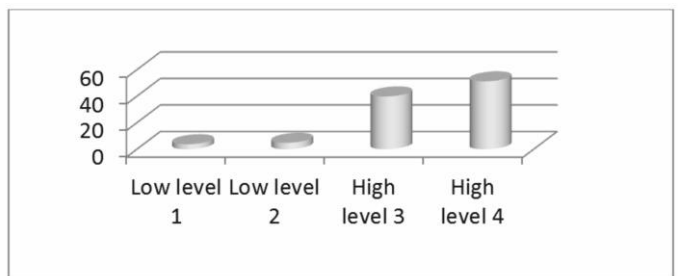

Fig. 7. Dimension "Attitude towards the lecturers"

In the fifth box has covered the dimension "Attitude towards the lecturers". About half of the students (51.3%) are at the highest level of maturity in terms of understanding the role of the lecturer - they realize that the lecturers are people who can help and demonstrate but they haven't control over

the mastering the material itself. Unfortunately, every second student tends to underestimate his/her responsibility for the learning process and have disproportionately high expectations for the role of the lecturer in this respect. This way of thinking is a kind of expression of an external localization of the control and is directly related to the amotivation.
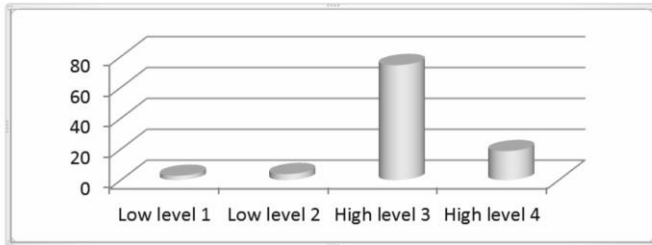

Fig. 8. Attitude to assessment

In the sixth box is examined the dimension "Attitude to assessment". A significant proportion of the students demonstrating the highest levels of maturity, expressed in the attitude to the assessments - 93.3% of the surveyed (74.5% - level 3 and 18.8% level 4). They maintain the opinion that assessments cannot objectively reflect the amount of learned - they are rather a measure of to what extent given discipline is mastered and what performance is in the class.

The last three dimensions - maturity in attitudes towards the University and training, attitudes towards the lecturers and maturity in the attitude to assessments - form the so-called General maturity of learning and knowledge.
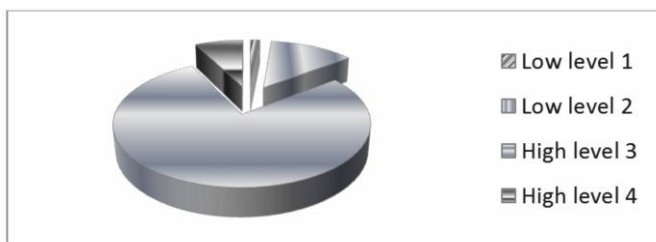

Fig. 9. General maturity of learning and knowledge

77.8% of the students are at the stage called "Target orientation" - the penultimate degree of maturity in the attitude towards the knowledge and learning. The change of values and the emphasis on the development of the own abilities are very characteristic for this stage. At this stage of their development, the students consider the obtaining of a diploma to be significant, considering the knowledge only as a means of achieving a particular social status or income, driven by the general

curiosity for learning new things, no matter what they are. The said links are discussed in more detail in the next section of the statement.

3. Motivational orientations

In the last part of the questionnaire, the seven motivational orientations have been applied:

AM- amotivation
NA - Achieving competitive success
SD - Discipline
FI - significance of the diploma
KI – the link "Knowledge - Life Success ,,
CG - curiosity, knowledge in general
CS - a particular curiosity, a desire to acquire in-depth knowledge in a particular area.

These motivational orientations are summarized in three groups:

- **Intrinsic motivation** – CG, CS, NA, SD
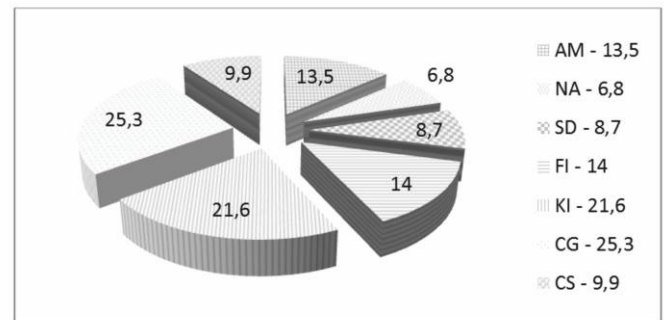- **Extrinsic motivation** – FI, KI
- **Amotivation** - AM

Fig. 11. Motivational orientations

At the moment the national value priorities in Bulgaria may be at the heart of the fact that the students do not see a relation between knowledge and success in the life (understood as a social status and income). Nearly every third respondent has indicated an answer, indicative for amotivation (13.5%) or attendance at the University only for the diploma obtaining (14%). In practice, this means that the academic behavior of more than ¼ of the student society is strongly influenced solely or mainly by obtaining a diploma, by the idea for the higher education to be considered as an opportunity for several years of freedom, pleasant and relatively carefree life, or by pleasant self-perception to being a student rather than as an worker or employee without higher education.

Perhaps surprisingly few (6.8%) are the answers, related to the wishing for success "in principle" - i.e. such type of answers would be given by people who love the competition in general and appreciate the victory in itself, regardless of the field of its achievement. Other studies show remarkably high levels of the achieving motivational orientation among the Bulgarians. Obviously, the student status is not considered a particular success, and the striving of competing with colleagues during the course of study is not a very significant motivational factor.

Only less than 10% of students have also indicated as a motive overall performance and discipline (understood in this case as a character trait). A similar proportion of the respondents also showed a conscious selective attitude towards economic and social sciences as areas of knowledge (only 9.85%). The latter means that the professional orientation of more than 90% of the students is influenced by the prestige of the profession or by the expectations of social and income status rather than by a conscious and purposeful interest in the economy and society as science and practices in itself.

Quite higher is the relative weight of motivations related to general, fundamental interest in knowledge, inquisitive and research curiosity in general, rather than in economic, social, legal and management sciences (25%). Similar weight has also the motive "knowledge gives more chances of social realization" (22%).

4. Maturity and motivational orientations

4.1. Overall maturity and complexity of thinking and motivational orientations

		ZU	q_AM	q_NA	q_SD	q_FI	q_KI	q_CG	q_CS
Spearman's rho ZU	CorrelationCoef.	1.000	-.095**	.043	-.025	-.232**	.132**	.131**	.077
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.003	.180	.440	.000	.000	.000	.016
	N	974	974	974	974	974	974	974	974

Table 2. Correlation between general maturity to learning and knowledge and motivational orientations

Achieving the research goals requires verification of the presence (or lack of) correlation between maturity in terms of learning and knowledge and motivational orientations.

As could be expected, the correlation between maturity in attitudes towards learning and knowledge and amotivation is inversely proportional (-0.095). The highest degree of maturity is related to the assessment of the higher education institution as a place that develops the potential and promotes the intellectual and emotional growth. At this stage, the person develops a strong internal localization of control, expressed in personal responsibility for everything learned. The examined correlated relation has confirmed the hypothesis that the how lower is the maturity, the higher is the amotivaion.

The survey showed that there is no correlation between maturity in attitudes towards learning and the competitive success. This also is expected and logical. At this stage, the person has built up his/her own evaluation criteria and the comparison with the peers is not of particular interest. The highest level of maturity implies the presence of striving to competence, personal growth, self-improvement.

This thesis is confirmed by the positive correlation between the maturity of attitudes towards learning and motivation induced by the thirst for knowledge and success in life (0.131), and by the inversely proportional dependency on the importance of the diploma as a motivational benchmark (-232). The mature attitude is related to the perception of lecturers as a source of knowledge, of the higher education institution - as a place for the development of potential abilities, of the assessment - just as a benchmark.

Motivational orientation of type "Self-discipline" does not correlate with the maturity. This has its logical explanation - the student can be disciplined, efficient, to follow and execute deadlines and tasks just because "must so" or because "this is how it's done".

The maturity in terms of learning is related to curiosity, the attitude towards the knowledge. Interestingly, there was no correlation with specific knowledge. There may be essential is the fact that some of the students have never studied economics, nor special subjects that are part of the training in the University of National and World Economy.

Hypothesis 1: Not confirmed. There is no relation between the high overall maturity and the maturity in the attitude towards learning on the one hand and the intrinsic motivational orientation on the other.

Hypothesis 2: It is not confirmed in terms of overall maturity. It has been confirmed in the second studied dimension of maturity - the one in the attitude towards learning. The study showed that when the level of maturity in attitudes to learning is low, the motivational orientation is extrinsic. As could be expected, the low levels determined aninversely proportional relationship with the importance of the diploma itself and a straight proportional one with the relation knowledge-success.

Hypothesis 3: Not confirmed - maturity levels do not correlate with the amotivation.

		OZ_za vseki	q_8
OZ_za vseki	Pearson Correlation	1	.214**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	974	974
q_8	Pearson Correlation	.214**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	974	974

Table 3. Correlation between "general maturity and complexity of thinking" and "gender "

The verification for differences in student maturity according to their gender showed that there is a correlation between the overall maturity and complexity of thinking and gender in the studied population are more mature than men (Table 3). Such correlation was not found between overall maturity to learning and gender (Table 4).

The study showed that a majority part of the students in the first year are not amotivated, and on the contrary - they come to the university with curiosity. Unfortunately, this is not enough to provide a complete and effective educational process. The efforts made only by the lecturers are not enough. Students should come to the university with clear ideas about what there awaits them, what efforts they have to make, what are the acceptable behavioral patterns. So the efforts of all those involved in education and training, especially in the area of secondary education, should be oriented towards developing a mature attitude towards the learning process. Within the secondary education system, it would be nice to be focused on building a clear idea of what higher education offers, how it contributes to personality development, and what professional skills it can develop. Establishing a clear link between the own efforts and the results achieved, the development of internal localization of control would be extremely beneficial for the students. Giving an adequate assessment of the diploma as such, the role of the lecturer and the assessments would help students develop adequate expectations and better assess their own place in the educational process. This on the one hand would facilitate the work of teachers at higher education institution and, on the other, would help to make the training system more efficient.

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