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# Scientific and Educational Potential of Socio-Cultural Activity

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**Abstract.** This paper builds on the recently emerged scholarship of researcher development and considers a potential conceptual framework to inform methodology in research on researcher development. Specifically, we examining the knowledge base of researcher development and discussing a clinical resources like socio-cultural theory works done by Lev Vygotsky (1931 / 1997), extensions, elaborations, and refinements of socio-cultural theory can be found in writings activity theory (Chaiklin, Lave, 1993; Leontiev, 1981) and cultural-historical activity theory (Cole, 1996; Cole, Engestrom, 1994) etc. and draws upon Vygotskian socio-cultural and activity theory. At the end of the paper, we present analysis of qualitative study data from existing researcher development literature to illustrate how this framework can be applied empirically.

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**Keywords:** *socio-cultural and activity theory, society and culture, conceptual framework, research agenda, methodology.*

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## Introduction

Researcher development is a recently emerged field of scholarship. Its knowledge base is scant in conceptual analyses and debates, and empirically it is heavily dependent on the findings about the development of doctoral researchers. This knowledge base is to be enriched both conceptually and empirically for the field to move forward. We argue that there is a particular need for a conceptual framework to underpin research on researcher development and consider the potential of a framework that draws upon Vygotskian socio-cultural and activity theory in comparison with Russian practical socio-cultural activity and conceptual analysis by Russian scholars. At the end of the paper, we present

analysis of qualitative data from existing researcher development literature to illustrate how this framework can be applied empirically<sup>1</sup>.

## **The Knowledge Base analyze of socio-cultural phenomena**

Analytical reading of special scientific sources testifies that the most authors of the published works consider that the more essential contradictions to the most typical branch problems of culture and education are:

- Discrepancy of the contents and forms of a production activity of the culture organization to really shown spiritual needs and interests of the population;
- Not formation of conditions and organizational mechanisms of development and self-development of the socio-cultural<sup>2</sup> sphere;
- Multisectoral dissociation and not coordination of activity of the cultural institutions functioning in the uniform cultural space;
- Imperfection of standard and legal base of a production activity of governing bodies and organizations of the socio-cultural sphere, public formations and cultural initiatives of the population;
- Traditions' absence, practice and technology of joint, mutually advantageous work of culture subjects with potential sponsors, investors, patrons as one of a perspective source of financial support of cultural initiatives;
- Decrease in the public importance and prestige of establishments of the socio-cultural sphere and, as a result, decrease in the social status and professional self-assessment of experts;
- Insufficient security of the preparation process of the qualified personnel in averages and higher educational institutions of culture program and auxiliary materials.

If in general to analyze the maintenance of socio-cultural life and activity of society, in its multi-complexity and diversity it is necessary to emphasize some extremely inconsistent tendencies. They take every leading sphere of socio-cultural activity – leisure, education, art and physical culture, socio-cultural rehabilitation, interethnic and international cultural cooperation that actually, and make cultural policy of the state.

The cultural policy is directed on revival and development of national cultures of the small people, on reflection of national features and traditions in the maintenance of cultural production, on support of socially significant kinds of activity, popular initiatives, crafts, national cultural societies, associations, cultural information centers and associations, other amateur formations. The essential contribution to realize of socio-cultural regional policy is made by joint activity of local cultural and leisure establishments,

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<sup>1</sup> *The Potential for Vygotskian Socio-cultural Perspective in Researching Researcher Development Minh Hue Nguyen 1, 2.* Prieiga per internetą: <http://ccsenet.org/journal/index.php/ass/article/viewFile/22640/14619>.

<sup>2</sup> Sarah Scott. *Annemarie Palincsar. Socio-cultural theory.* Updated on Jul 15, 2013. Prieiga per internetą: <http://www.education.com/reference/article/sociocultural-theory/>.

cultural centers, laboratories, clubs, associations, associations, centers of art crafts, the ethnographic museums.

Scientific and educational potential of the socio-cultural activity, in our opinion, suffers from a noticeable incommensurability of the elements making it today. Research functions are actually completely assigned to territorial educations which are compelled to analyze, as a rule, independently situation developing in the cultural and leisure sphere, to estimate the processes happening in it, to develop priorities and socio-cultural programs. Moreover, owing to the objective reasons, recently the gap between federal and territorial divisions of culture branch more and more goes deep. In a word, the obvious list towards regional empiric-technological socio-cultural activity researches is planned.

This tendency should be estimated as negative. First, the developed structure of culture branch doesn't allow delegating power of the full scientific analysis of socio-cultural activity on places, to its separate divisions today. Secondly, many subjects of federation don't possess the sufficient scientific potential, capable adequately to solve pressing theoretic-empirical problems. Thirdly, empiric-technological issues can't be effectively resolved without scientific and methodical, fundamental provisions which have to be developed, approved and recorded at the federal level.

The general negative background and undesirable tendencies in scientific researches of socio-cultural activity and staff training of the average and higher qualification. Nevertheless, the negative tendencies, which are made nowadays don't reduce advantages of already available experience and attempts of the effective analysis of public leisure organization. Scientific and educational potential of socio-cultural activity researches is so rich that allows solving problems which are different on subject, the contents, territorial level, including:

& historical and analytical character, the defining main stages and stages of formation and development of socio-cultural activity;

& theoretic-methodological character, the socio-cultural activity explaining the social nature and its separate processes revealing regularities of educational, creative and recreated activity in the leisure sphere;

& scientific and technological character, the opening features of formation, the analysis, monitoring of organizational, administrative, creative decisions in culture branch;

& organizational and practical character, promoting the operational analysis of the situations arising on the course of a production activity in the socio-cultural sphere including which are quite predicted and force major;

& training and educational character, providing professional and pedagogical base of preparation, retraining and professional development of experts of socio-cultural activity.

Among historical and analytical problems of the socio-cultural activity works which belong to the Soviet period of public leisure organization, dated starting 1917 are distinguished. Problems of the contemporary history are connected with research of the socio-cultural activity during the periods of reorganization and publicity (1985-1991) and the present stage of development of the market relations (since 1991 to the present).

However, thus remains actually not studied public leisure organization and leisure activity of the presocialist population of the Russian Federation. Only recently some works on Peter I's reforms in the sphere of socio-cultural activity started to appear. They belong to formation of the first Russian class clubs, state libraries and museums, people's houses, establishments of art. The role of the Russian monarchs, prominent statesmen, the nobility and merchants in creation of socio-cultural activity traditions is in a new way treated. The historical and cultural researches analyzing development of the socio-cultural activity in foreign countries are of special scientific value.

The range of a theoretic-methodological perspective covers numerous issues of socio-cultural activity functioning as a specific social system. Socio-cultural activity bears known social loading, pursues definite purposes, carries out the corresponding tasks and functions, is under construction on the principles inherent in it, is realized in the concrete directions, forms, methods and means of activity. Large methodological problems are researches of the subject, object of the socio-cultural activity, a conceptual framework of the socio-cultural activity, socio-cultural activity in system of culture. Unfortunately, noted subject didn't gain rather full development in special sources.

Many of these issues are still not resolved, low-studied, and disputable.

Predictive aspects of the socio-cultural activity represent one of the newest directions of scientific and methodological researches socio-cultural activity. At the same time, there is no full development, comprehensive programs, objective tendencies and prospects of socio-cultural activity development, transformation of types and forms of leisure activity, its strategic objectives and tasks today. The most important subject of the scientific analysis the perspective of socio-cultural activity functioning in the conditions of the market is represented. Development of the market relations in the Russian Federation, in our opinion, is the defining condition of the socio-cultural activity development, the objective factor influencing selection of the contents and forms of spiritual leisure filling.

Thus, within the last decades researchers saved up enough wealth of experience of the socio-cultural activity analysis. At the same time, need of development of basic methodological problems of public leisure organization on the basis of which numerous empiric-technological problems would be solved is sharply felt today. Among the most perspective subjects for the scientific analysis it is possible to call such as "Social nature and essence of socio-cultural activity", "Methodological bases of socio-cultural activity", "Conceptual justification of concept socio-cultural activity", "socio-cultural activity in the context of cultural science", "socio-cultural activity in activity of society", "The contents and the socio-cultural activity forms", "The principles and functions of spiritual filling of leisure", "socio-cultural activity in system of culture", "subject and object of socio-cultural activity".

The scientific and technological and pedagogically issued analysis of the social nature of cultural activity, in essence, is connected with answers to questions of what place it takes in structure of society how interacts with social institutes, what its mission, purposes and fundamental differences from similar kinds of activity. Considering the socio-cultural

activity as an integral part of society activity, it is necessary to emphasize universality and dynamism of its characteristics.

As the socio-cultural activity is one of important elements of spiritual society life, it contains all signs of creative activity. And, in this case doesn't matter, what level of professionalism and the public importance the result is reached. The creative production created by the person at a leisure – the amateur song, the poem, a picture, the video movie, etc., can be of art and esthetic value only for the author and his immediate environment.

Besides, the socio-cultural activity acts as an element of ideological installations and platforms of various social movements. This statement is quite admissible if to consider that in the developed society most of his members adhere to quite certain philosophical, moral, esthetic, religious ideas and views. Ideological positions, both certain people, and the whole social groups and classes, can't but be reflected in nature of carrying out their leisure time, the contents and the socio-cultural activity forms. The creative production created in the sphere of leisure can also carry a certain ideological print, express interests of these or those social groups.

At the same time, it is necessary to recognize that the socio-cultural activity has been formed as an independent production branch. As well as any other branch, it has own network of the enterprises and labor collectives, bodies of the administrative and methodical management, scientific centers and educational institutions, system of the economic account and reporting. However, unlike production of goods, products of the cultural and leisure sphere are non-material goods, but service.

Irrespective of character and the manifestation sphere, the socio-cultural activity solves the major social purposes and problems. Among them studying, satisfaction and an exaltation of spiritual needs and interests of the personality, formation of its socially significant qualities, developments of creative person's abilities, creation favorable cultural macro - and microenvironments, the statement of advantage of universal cultural norms and values over class.

## Conclusion

During last, at least, four decades, the subject of the scientific researches generalizing a wide range of methodological and organizational and practical problems of SKD was defined:

- & leading directions of public leisure organization of the population;
- & leisure of various population groups;
- & both types and forms of leisure occupations;
- & activity organization of various types of the leisure centers;
- & amateur creativity;
- & club formations;

& leisure actions and services.

Socio-cultural activity was created as a main subject matter today and that is the most essential, as independent specialty in registers of secondary and higher special education of the Russian Federation. And therefore training and educational problems of the socio-cultural activity are expressed in creation of necessary base to train qualified specialist of arts and the cultural and leisure centers establishments, their professional development. The network of averages and the highest special educational institutions operating today allows resolving basic personnel issues. At the same time dynamics of the processes happening in spiritual life of society demands constant attention of scientists and teachers to the development of new training programs, plans, the list of specialties and qualifications of the experts satisfying to modern pressing needs of practice.

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## Sociokultūrinės veiklos mokslinis ir edukacinis potencialas

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### Santrauka

Šiame straipsnyje analizuojamas tyrimo konceptas, kurį autorė naudoja metodinėms priemonėms sukurti. Šio koncepto metodologijos pagrindu naudojama L. Vygotsky'o (1931 / 1997) sociokultūrinė teorija ir jos diskusijos bei klinikiniai tyrimai (Chaiklin, Lave, 1993; Leontiev, 1981), remiamasi kultūrinio švietimo bei kultūrinės veiklos tyrimais (Cole, 1996; Cole, Engestrom, 1994). Pristatomi teoriniai teiginiai yra susiję su praktiniais, empiriniais ir struktūriniais tyrimais.

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**Esminiai žodžiai:** *sociokultūrinės veiklos teorija, visuomenė ir kultūra, konceptualus pagrindas, metodologija.*

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