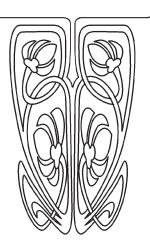






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Article

Subjective well-being in its relation to various forms of activity of the student youth

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Abstract. Social activity is the sphere of students' personal socialization and fulfillment. The study of interconnection between adherence to various forms of social activity and characteristics of subjective well-being allows unveiling the most general parameters of student activity's consistence and personal orientation. The purpose of the study is to carry our analysis of the interconnection between subjective well-being characteristics and social activity forms. It is assumed that various forms of activity have the potential for satisfying students' psychological needs and creating a balance between the desired and the real situation. *Participants*. 215 university students of Russia (aged from 17 to 27; the mean age was M = 20,2; SD = 2.44 (42.3% males). Measurements. The following techniques were used: questionnaire for defining major demographic characteristics and adherence to various forms of activity that were classified as follows: civil-political, protest-subcultural, spiritual-educational, and leisure activity, to define subjective well-being characteristics we used the Basic Needs Satisfaction in General Scale (M. M. Johnston, S. Finney); Subjective well-being scale (S. Lyubomirsky, H. Lepper); Life satisfaction scale (E. Diener); Social frustration technique (L. I. Wasserman). Results. The cognitive component of subjective well-being in students is coupled with their desire for civil and political participation, volunteerism, potential development, and education. Emotional component is positively correlated with implementation of spiritual search, educational activity, self-development; it is negatively correlated with protest forms of activity and participation in sub-cultural movements. It has been found out that leisure forms of activity are correlated with satisfaction of basic needs for autonomy, competence and pertinence; protest-subcultural forms of activity do not fully promote satisfaction of the need for autonomy and competence; students' adherence to civil-political and spiritual-educational activity is linked with satisfaction of their need for competence. *Conclusions*. The most psychologically-tense forms of students' social activity are the protest ones, as well as participation in subcultural movements; they are related to basic needs' frustration and social frustration.

Keywords: students, personality, subjective well-being, social activity, frustration

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Научная статья УДК 159.9:316.4

Субъективное благополучие в связи с различными формами активности студенческой молодежи

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Аннотация. Социальная активность является сферой социализации личности студентов и их самореализации. Исследование взаимосвязи приверженности различным формам социальной активности и характеристик субъективного благополучия позволит выяснить наиболее общие параметры согласованности активности и направленности личности студентов. Цель: провести анализ взаимосвязи характеристик субъективного благополучия и форм социальной активности. Предполагается, что разные формы активности имеют потенциал удовлетворения психологических потребностей студентов и установления баланса между желаемым и действительным. Участники. 215 студентов университетов России в возрасте 17–27 лет; средний возраст M = 20,2; SD = 2.44 (42.3% – мужчины). Методы (инструменты): анкета для выявления основных демографических характеристик и приверженности различным формам активности, которые объединены в четыре вида – гражданско-политическую, протестно-субкультурную, духовно-образовательную, досуговую. Для определения характеристик субъективного благополучия использованы: The Basic Needs Satisfaction in General Scale (M. M. Johnston, S. Finney); Шкала субъективного счастья (С. Любомирски и Х. Леппер); Шкала удовлетворенности жизнью (Э. Динер); методика социальной фрустрированности (Л. И. Вассерман). *Результаты.* Когнитивный компонент субъективного благополучия студентов сопряжен с их стремлением к гражданскому и политическому участию, добровольчеству, развитию своего потенциала, а также к образованию. Эмоциональный компонент позитивно связан с реализацией духовного поиска, образовательной активностью, саморазвитием и негативно – с протестными формами активности и участием в субкультурных движениях. Установлено: досуговые формы активности связаны с удовлетворением базовых потребностей в автономии, компетентности и связанности с другими; протестно-субкультурные формы активности не способствуют в полной мере удовлетворению потребности в автономии и компетентности; приверженность студентов гражданско-политической и духовно-образовательной активности сопряжена с удовлетворением потребности в компетентности. *Основные выводы.* Наиболее психологически напряженные формы социальной активности студентов – протестные и участие в субкультурных движениях – связаны с фрустрацией базовых потребностей, социальной фрустрацией.

Ключевые слова: студент, личность, субъективное благополучие, социальная активность, фрустрация

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Introduction

Personal subjective well-being is an indicator of congruence between internal and external environments of an individual. Due to the fact that during student age social activity gains significant importance for an individual, is becomes a foundation for development, fulfillment of one's crucial needs and a tool for self-fulfillment. That is why the study of correlation between characteristics of subjective well-being and social activity gains significant scientific theoretical and practical importance. It is instrumental in finding out which particular forms of social activity are the most sensitive ones from the point of view of personal subjective well-being and preservation of the dynamic balance in students with an acting social environment.

The studies of students' subjective well-being, which have been conducted over the last decades, prove its significance for the whole system of relations between students both internally and

externally. Certainty regarding one's professional future, satisfaction with one's professional choice and professional identity in accordance with training profile has the greatest significance for forming and preserving students' wellbeing [1]. Studies dedicated to value factors/predictors of students' subjective well-being have been instrumental in defining a range of important facts which to a great extent explain the link between students' well-being and their activity and orientation towards certain goals. Thus, in individuals with low level of subjective well-being we have revealed the significance of such values as self-confidence, financially-secure life, freedom as independence in respect to one's actions that are inconsistent with reality, i.e. are not satisfied in real life [2]. Meanwhile, personal regulators of general social activity can affect subjective well-being in different ways [3]. Such characteristics as optimism, cheerfulness, and desire for new impressions characterize personality of students with subjective well-being [4].

It is of utmost significance to be included into social activity of the student community under conditions of educational migration, when the process of adaptation to new life conditions and activity (i. e. academic activity) coincides with adaptation to a new culture language, and climate. At the same time, the studies have found out that there is a certain "civilized" distinguished feature related to well-being experience, i.e. students from Eastern and Western cultures (countries) rely on various values to preserve their well-being under new conditions of life. For instance, students from Eastern cultures experience happiness and joy when they materialize such values as cognitive development and acquisition of life experience, while students from Western countries, despite adhering to individual values, experience less joy and happiness when the value of self-realization, psychological and physical comfort is materialized [5]. Similar study results were obtained in relation to students in Russia and abroad [6]. This is obviously related to the fact that differences in cultural values serve as an obstacle for implementing social activity. In Russian conditions we observe a combination of eastern and western cultural values, at the same time Russian culture is neither eastern nor western. Therefore, it is not accidental that informal social support is an important factor of students' subjective well-being [7]. Accordingly, inclusion into various types of joint social activity can obviously strengthen horizontal connections between students and create the conditions for communication, exchange of success techniques, social skills' development and competence, as a whole. Another important factor in students' well-being is physical activity and general activity as a whole. Studies have found that students with active lifestyle are characterized by significantly higher level of self-confidence and satisfaction with their lives [8]. Finally, there is evidence that an important condition for students' subjective well-being is the ability to try various types of activity. In other words, making attempts at various forms of activity is not just a way of relaxation or deriving pleasure, but rather a search for tools for achieving social success. It has been shown that in case of activities with clear objectives and criteria for success, subjective satisfaction in the field of study/work, unlike other spheres of life, is primarily associated with the possibilities of goal achievement (ability to concentrate) and flexible adjustment when faced with excessive difficulties (giving up on the goal) [9]. Thus, previous studies of students' subjective well-being indicate that there is fundamental connection with implementation of activity in accordance with socio-psychological characteristics (attitudes, values, compatibility, etc.). It was found that social satisfaction explains up to 22% of variations in the overall social activity of an individual [10]. At the same time, we are still faced with the question whether there are areas of activity that are more or less interconnected with characteristics of subjective well-being, or whether any activity is the precursor of well-being.

The *purpose* of the study is to carry out analysis of the interconnection between characteristics of subjective well-being and social activity forms.

The *hypothesis* is that various forms of activity have the potential for satisfaction of psychological needs and striking the balance between the desired and the real situation.

Methods. 215 university students aged from 17 to 27 took part in the study. The mean age was M = 20.2; SD = 2.44 (42.3% males).

We used the questionnaire for defining major demographic characteristics and scales aimed at measuring adherence to a certain type of social activity (the scale dimension was 5 points according to Likert Scale): altruistic activity (AA); leisure activity (LA); socio-political activity (SPA); Internet-network activity (IA); civic activity (CA); socio-economic activity (SEA); educational-developmental activity (EDA); spiritual activity (SA); religious activity (RA); protest activity (PA); radical-protest activity (RPA); subcultural activity (SA). The scales were designed based on the studies of social activity [11]. Using factor analysis they were divided into 4 new scales, i. e. civic-political (CPA); subcultural-protest activity (SPrA), spiritual-educational activity (SEA), leisure activity (LA). All scales have acceptable reliability level: α Cronbach = 0.72–0.76.

To assess the degree of satisfaction with the need for autonomy, competence and relatedness we used the Basic Needs Satisfaction in General Scale [12] in its adapted version. The scales have sufficient reliability level, α Cronbach = 0.66–0.76; χ^2 Friedman = 87.01, p < 0.001.

Subjective well-being assessment includes two major parameters, i.e. satisfaction with life and experiencing happiness. We used the subjective well-being scale by S. Lyubomirsky and H. Lepper adapted by D. A. Leontiev and E. N. Osin [13] (scale with 4 statements). This scale evaluates the emotional component of subjective well-being [14]. It has an acceptable reliability level α Cronbach = 0. 74; χ^2 Friedman = 172.3, p < 0.001. E. Diener's Life satisfaction scale adapted by E. N. Osin and D. A. Leontiev [13] (scale with 5 statements). The scale has a good reliability level, (LS) α Cronbach = 0.83; χ^2 Friedman = 178.22, p < 0.001. Subjective well-being scales are as-

36 Научный отдел



sessed based on the 7-point scale depending on the agreement / disagreement with the statement, or manifestation/lack of manifestation of the trait.

We also used the modified version of L. I. Wasserman's Social frustration technique, which includes 15 points used to evaluate social frustration level. Each point is given from 0 to 4 points (completely satisfied – completely dissatisfied). The general index of social satisfaction/social frustration is calculated based on the arithmetic mean for all points [15].

To process primary data we used the statistic software IBM SPSS Statistics + PS IMAGO PRO, which includes the AMOS programme for modeling with structural equations.

Results and discussion

Students' social activity is polydirectional. That is why certain activity types form enlarged groups. Previously conducted factor analysis helped to define 4 groups of this type: civil-political (civil, socio-economic, socio-political activity) (CPA), subcultural-protest (protest, radical protest and subcultural activity) (SPrA), spiritual and educational (altruistic activity, educational and developmental, spiritual and religious activity) (SEA), leisure (leisure and Internet-network activity) (LA). Let us turn to correlation analysis data (Table). The table shows that adherence to civic-political and spiritual-educational activity is associated with general satisfaction with life. At the same time, experiencing happiness is negatively associated with protest-subcultural activity and positively associated with spiritual-educational activity. These data indicate that students' perception and assessment of their lives as favourable ones is associated with implementation of activity forms that characterize their desire for civic and political participation, volunteering, development of their potential, as well as education and further education. Emotionally positive assessment of life and experience of happiness is associated with spiritual search, educational activity, self-development and is negatively associated with protest forms of activity and participation in subcultural movements. It is obvious that the latter, not being popular in the mass youth environment in Russia, becomes a factor that is frustrating for students, since it does not find support in their environment. Data on satisfaction of basic needs for autonomy, competence, relatedness with others, i.e. indicators of eudemonistic well-being are similar. Based on the obtained data, satisfaction of the need for autonomy is negatively associated with adherence to protest-subcultural activity and positively associated with leisure activity. Satisfaction of the need for competence is associated

with all types of social activity (it is negatively associated with adherence to protest-subcultural activity). Satisfaction of the need for relatedness with others is associated with commitment to leisure activities. These data indicate that psychological well-being of students is associated with leisure activities at a fairly high level. Perhaps, as far as leisure forms of activity are concerned, the basic needs of students are most fully satisfied, as they find opportunities for self-fulfillment, as well as communication and experience of unity with others at an emotional level there. This is no coincidence, since previous studies show the importance of joint leisure activities for students' self-fulfillment [16, 17]. Negative interconnection between satisfaction of the need for autonomy, competence and adherence to protest-subcultural forms of activity may indicate that these forms of activity do not fully contribute to satisfaction of these needs and suggest a certain alienation from that "big student body" as a social group that has its own cultural component these forms of activity obviously compete with. The relationship between satisfaction of the need for competence and students' commitment to civilpolitical and spiritual-educational activity is quite clear. These forms of activity obviously contain significant cognitive capital, which, on the one hand, requires competence, and on the other hand, contributes to satisfaction of this need.

Let us turn to data that reflects the relationship between adherence to various forms of activity and indicators of social frustration. The table shows that types of students' social activity are associated with different indicators of social frustration/satisfaction. Thus, the smallest number of correlations (with satisfaction with life prospects, social situation, situation in the state, and medical care level) was revealed for adherence to spiritual and educational activity. In other words, adherence to spiritual and educational activity is associated with satisfaction in areas that primarily determine the meaningful perspective of life.

Leisure forms of activity are associated with satisfaction with relationships with fellow students, life prospects, living conditions, relations with friends and close acquaintances, leisure activities and lifestyle in general. These data shows that there is interconnection between leisure activity and lack of frustration in terms of interpersonal relations, stability of living conditions and life style. Commitment to civil and political forms of activity is associated with satisfaction with content of one's work (study), life prospects, one's social status, social situation, services and consumer services, medical services, and leisure activities. In other words, here we can see the main areas that characterize certain

assessment of stability in society, satisfaction with social relations. Finally, in case of protest-subcultural activity, we revealed positive correlations with frustration in the field of education, life prospects, living conditions, family relations, social situation and situation in the state, relations with friends and

close acquaintances, services and consumer services, security level at the place of residence. These data testify in favor of interconnection between protest-subcultural activity and social frustration both in the field of relationships with others and in relation to social structure and institutions rendering services.

Table. Correlation analysis of variables results

Types of activity	Civil and political	Protest and subcultural	Spiritual and educational	Leisure
Activity	.62**	.47**	.65**	.49**
Satisfaction with life	.16**	-0.1	.23**	0.08
Happiness	0.04	18**	.16**	0.11
Autonomy	-0.02	20**	0.06	.24**
Competence	.14*	26**	.21**	.24**
Connectedness	0	-0.05	0.07	.24**
Satisfaction with education	-0.08	.12*	-0.02	-0.11
Relations with fellow students	-0.07	0.03	-0.06	13*
Educational content	14*	0.03	-0.1	-0.07
Life prospects	19**	.12*	14*	15**
Social status	16**	0.09	-0.03	-0.08
Material status	-0.1	0.05	-0.11	-0.04
Living conditions	-0.01	.15**	0.03	13*
Relations in the family	-0.03	.13*	0	-0.08
Social situation	14*	.14*	13*	0.06
Relations with friends	0	.16**	0.09	12*
Services	14*	.12*	-0.05	-0.04
Medical services	15**	-0.03	14*	0.03
Leisure	14*	0.01	0.08	26**
Security level	-0.04	.20**	0	-0.07
Life style	-0.02	0.09	-0.03	17**

Note. The following notations for significance level were adopted: ** - p < 0.01; * - p < 0.05.

Conclusion

Personal subjective well-being is an important indicator of compatibility in any individual's relations with the world. Students' well-being reflects the coherence between multiple life processes, numerous links with the educational environment, social environment of the student and teacher community, society as a whole, as well as numerous needs related to self-assertion and one's extrapolation into the future. Therefore, the study of the relationship between characteristics of students' subjective well-being and adherence to various forms of activity makes it possible to determine life areas where they experience maximum frustration and forms of activity that help to eliminate it.

As a result of the study, we have come to the following conclusions, which generally confirm the main hypothesis.

- 1. Cognitive component of students' subjective well-being is associated with their desire for civic and political participation, volunteering, development of their potential, as well as their need for education and further education. The emotional component is positively correlated with the implementation of spiritual search, educational activity, self-development and negatively correlated with protest forms of activity and participation in subcultural movements.
- 2. Various forms of activity have different potential for basic needs' satisfaction. Leisure forms of activity are correlated with satisfaction of basic needs for autonomy, competence and connectedness with others; protest-subcultural forms of activity do not fully promote satisfaction of the need for autonomy and competence; students' commitment to civil-political and spiritual-educational activity is associated with satisfaction of the need for competence.

38 Научный отдел



- 3. The specifics of interconnection between adherence to types of social activity and social frustration/satisfaction is expressed through the quantity and intimacy of relationships and definition of areas of satisfaction/frustration for each type of activity, i. e. for leisure activity these are areas of relationships, living conditions and lifestyle; for civil and political activity these are areas that characterize a certain assessment of society's stability, satisfaction with public relations; for protest-subcultural activity these are the areas of relations with others, social structure and institutions of services; for spiritual and educational activity it is the area of meaningful life perspectives.
- 4. The most psychologically intense forms of students' social activity, i.e. protest activity and participation in subcultural movements, are associated with frustration of basic needs and social frustration. Forms of activity that characterize civic participation, leisure (including leisure time spent on the Internet), educational and developmental cognitive orientation of students contribute to manifestations of well-being and satisfaction with life.

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