

PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING RELATION TO INDIVIDUAL ORIENTATION IN EARLY ADULTHOOD

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Abstract. An early adulthood is characterised by such processes as identity stabilisation, understanding of one's place in society, and dealing with issues of the meaning and goals of life, that all lead to the implementation and reshaping of individual orientation and feelings of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with life. During this age period, self-actualization, understanding individual needs and capabilities become most important. Therefore, a sense of psychological well-being is closely linked with orientation to achievements in activities. The study aims to provide a theoretical analysis of contemporary approaches to psychological well-being and individual orientation research, as well as exploration of relationships between psychological well-being and personal orientation. The study aims to answer the following questions. Whether there is a link between psychological well-being and orientation of a person in early adulthood? Whether there is a link between psychological well-being components and orientation of a person in early adulthood? In the study 60 respondents aged from 20 to 35 years participated. The methods implemented in the study were the Orientation Inventory and the Scales of Psychological Well-Being. As a result of the study, partial links between psychological well-being and individual orientation and between psychological well-being components and orientation of a person in early adulthood were revealed. These relationships confirm that the basic components of psychological well-being are the main positive personal characteristics of a fully functioning person, which are inherent in every human being.

Keywords: psychological well-being, orientation, psychological well-being components, self-actualisation.

Introduction

The relevance of this study is based in the fact that research of such multidimensional constructs as orientation of a person and psychological well-being requires taking into account not only theoretical aspects, but also the trends identified in various studies specific to certain groups. In this study participants were 20-35 year old higher school students. Many authors believe that according to its psychological characteristics this age period can be described as an early adulthood. During this period, identity stabilisation, determination of one's place in society, dealing with issues of the meaning and goals of life all lead to the individual orientation reshaping and accordingly to feelings of satisfaction/dissatisfaction with life. In this regard, it is the degree of self-understanding that determines individual orientation of an adult.

There is no consensus in determining the concept of individual orientation, however, in all theoretical approaches it is understood as the main characteristic of a person [1-6]. In the tradition of the humanistic approach, orientation is defined as an integrated set of attitudes and beliefs of an individual, as well as a lifestyle orientation [1], the manifestation of innate needs [3; 4]. As an integral feature of an individual, orientation is a universal basis for all of his or her manifestations, realised in the context of the attitude to the world, to people, to himself or herself and in relation to the activities, which is reflected in the relevant typology of both socially – positive and socio – negative poles of orientation. American psychologists, theoretically, consider the category of the individual orientation within a multilevel concept of *orientation*: on the one hand, it is an ability to be aware of themselves and others in the process of communication, and on the other – it is understood as a generalized paradigm of an individual, his or her ideology or point of view [7]. At the same time modern authors [8] note that there is no common understanding of this concept or of the orientation types.

In this study orientation of a person is understood in line with Rogers's [3] and Maslow's [4] humanistic model, as well as the theory of personal constructs defined by Kelly [2].

When considering theoretical approaches to the definition of a psychological well-being concept, most authors highlight multidimensionality of the construct [9; 10]. The authors [11-13] believe that psychological well-being, as an integral component, can be characterised by a degree of focus on the implementation of the main components of positive functioning of an individual and the degree of realisation of this direction, resulting in a subjective feeling of satisfaction with themselves and their lives. Diener [9] linked subjective understanding of psychological well-being to the subjective assessment of the overall quality of life, which reflects not so much the assessment of individual life

circumstances, but rather certain stable personality characteristics of an evaluator (e.g., introversion-extroversion). Brandshaw et. al. [14] indicate the same understanding of psychological well-being concept. Ryff [11] identified the following elements of the psychological well-being: positive relationships with others, autonomy, environment control, personal growth, presence of purpose in life, and self-acceptance. The authors indicate that within the last 5 years of psychological well-being definition development the focus shifted to the research ideas proposed by James (1902) that concern healthy thinking and to Rogers's [3] concepts of the fully functioning person. Roger [3] believes that *the good life* is not a static state of satisfaction or happiness, or a state of self-actualization and self-perfection, stress reduction or homeostasis. It is a dynamic process of moving forward in accordance with one's true nature. The basic components of psychological well-being, allocated by Ryff [11] are in tune with the five basic personality characteristics of a fully functioning person defined by Rogers [3]. In accordance to this model, Ryff [11] developed a research tool called the Scales of Psychological Well-Being.

Based on the Ryff's [11] and Diener's [9] model of psychological well-being, as well as Rogers's [15] self-concept of a person with indicated I-Real and I-Ideal factors [16], Fesenko [13] offered his version of the model. Fesenko [13] divided the general concept of psychological well-being into several components: real psychological well-being and ideal psychological well-being. The author also developed the content of the psychological well-being structure.

Based on the analysis of psychological well-being research available for the current paper authors, it was concluded that due to insufficiently developed definition of the concept, there are no specific methodological tools for research. Most researchers use surveys and the most common method of research is the *Scales of Psychological Well-Being*, a questionnaire developed by Ryff [11].

In this study, the basis for the objective and research question definition was the conceptual model of psychological well-being formulated within the humanistic approach.

Study objective: theoretical analysis of contemporary approaches to psychological well-being and individual orientation research, as well as exploration of relationships between psychological well-being and orientation of an individual.

Subject of research: psychological well-being and individual orientation relationships.

Research questions are as follows. Whether there is a link between psychological well-being and orientation of a person in early adulthood? Whether there is a link between psychological well-being components and orientation of a person in early adulthood?

Materials and methods

Study participants: In the current study voluntarily 60 participants took part, students of Riga higher education institutions aged 20-35. The sample is heterogeneous: 22 men and 38 women participated. Median age: 25.0 years for men and 26.0 years for women. The sample is true, formed by possibility. Employed: 20 men (90.9 %) and 14 women (36.8 %). Marital status: men – 5 married (22.7 %), women – 11 married (28.9 %). Divorced: 4 women among the unmarried.

Methods of the study: the Orientation Inventory [17], adapted by Obozov [18] and the Scales of Psychological Well-Being [11] in Shevelenkova and Fesenko modification [13]. The obtained Cronbach- α coefficient indicates that all the test questions do measure the same feature, thus, the questionnaires can be applied to the sample in the actual form. Implemented data analysis software: SPSS 20.0 and Excel. The mathematical apparatus of the study was chosen according to the research questions outlined above.

Results and discussion

Quantitative analysis of the study results

Diagrams of the obtained mean values are given in Fig. 1, Fig. 2 and Fig. 3. The data in Fig. 1 show the psychological well-being components for men and women in the sample. The tendency in the sample is as follows: men demonstrate low values in scales "Ability to establish quality ties to other" (QO), "Autonomy" (AUT), "Ability to manage environments" (CE), "Personal growth" (PG), "Purpose in life" (PL), "Self-Acceptance" (SA); women in the scale "Personal growth" (PG).

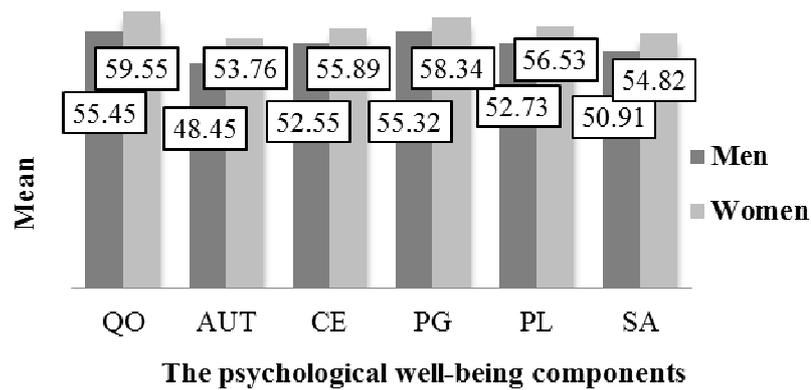


Fig. 1. Mean values of the psychological well-being components for men and women

The data in Fig. 2 show the current level of psychological well-being in men and women in the sample. It was found that both men and women have low levels of psychological well-being.

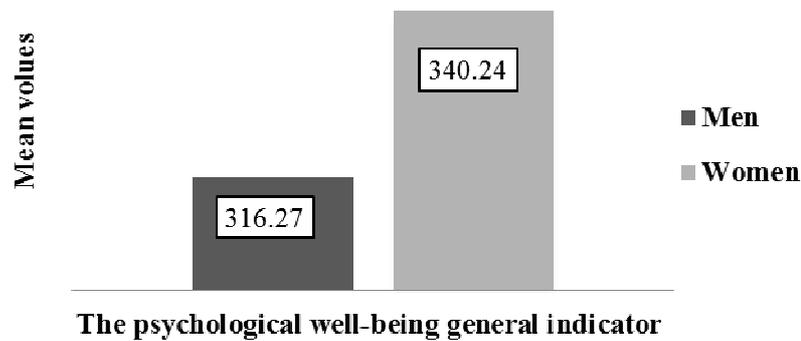


Fig. 2. Mean values of the psychological well-being general indicator for men and women

The data in Fig. 3 show the current level of individual orientation of men and women in the sample. The obtained data analysis (Fig. 3) revealed the overall trend in the sample: men demonstrated more pronounced orientation towards self (IND.O), whereas, women were more focused on task-orientation (TO).

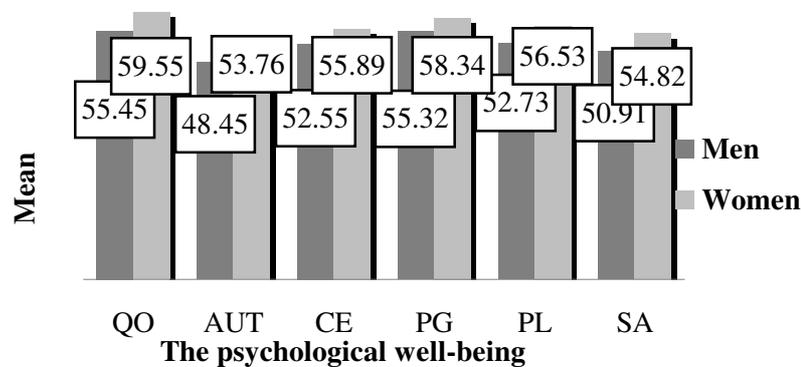


Fig. 3. Current level of individual orientation of men and women in the sample

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics data were obtained using the computer program SPSS-20.0. In particular, the first quartile (or P_{25} percentile) and the third quartile (or P_{75} percentile) data were calculated in order to break down the results obtained with the *Orientation Inventory* into levels: low, high and medium. The levels of psychological well-being were calculated in accordance with the norms provided in the description of the questionnaire. Kolmogorov-Smirnov test (Lillifor adjustment) revealed 3 cases of the distribution of the empirical data division from the normal distribution: in 10 out of 10 cases among women and in 2 among men. Shapiro-Wilks test revealed 3 divisions among women and 1 in the group of men.

The analysis of descriptive statistics data indicated that the data were not normally distributed, therefore, for future analysis the following non-parametrical criteria were implemented: the Spearman's rank correlation coefficient to identify the correlation between the variables and *U-Mann-Whitney* test to investigate the differences.

Analysis of correlations

The Spearman's rank correlation coefficient analysis revealed the following statistically significant relationships between the components of well-being and individual orientation:

Among women:

- the higher the level of self-orientation, the lower are: the desire to establish quality ties to other ($r = -0.673, p \leq 0.001$); the desire for autonomy ($r = -0.491, p \leq 0.01$); the desire to control environment ($r = -0.611, p \leq 0.001$); the desire to grow and develop as a person ($r = -0.587, p \leq 0.001$); the desire to comprehend the purpose in life ($r = -0.615, p \leq 0.001$); the level of self-acceptance ($r = -0.541, p \leq 0.001$); and the level of actual psychological well-being ($r = -0.718, p \leq 0.001$).
- the higher the level of interaction-orientation, the higher is the level of the desire to establish quality ties to other ($r = 0.333, p \leq 0.05$).
- the higher the level of task-orientation, the higher are: the level of the desire to establish quality ties to other ($r = 0.607, p \leq 0.001$); the desire for autonomy ($r = 0.617, p \leq 0.001$); the desire to control environment ($r = 0.659, p \leq 0.001$); the desire to grow and develop as a person ($r = 0.589, p \leq 0.001$); the desire to comprehend the purpose in life ($r = 0.713$ at $p \leq 0.001$); the level of self-acceptance ($r = 0.583, p \leq 0.001$); and the level of actual psychological well-being ($r = 0.783, p \leq 0.001$).

Among men:

- the higher the level of self-orientation, the lower are: the desire to establish quality ties to other ($r = -0.515, p \leq 0.05$); the desire for autonomy ($r = -0.483, p \leq 0.05$); the desire to control environment ($r = -0.563, p \leq 0.01$); the desire to grow and develop as a person ($r = -0.601, p \leq 0.01$); the desire to comprehend the purpose in life ($r = -0.597, p \leq 0.01$); the level of self-acceptance ($r = -0.529, p \leq 0.05$); and the level of actual psychological well-being ($r = -0.643, p \leq 0.001$).
- the higher the level of interaction-orientation, the lower are: the desire to control environment ($r = -0.465, p \leq 0.05$); the desire to grow and develop as a person ($r = -0.517, p \leq 0.05$); and the level of actual psychological well-being ($r = -0.447, p \leq 0.05$).
- the higher the level of task-orientation, the higher are: the level of the desire to establish quality ties to other ($r = 0.580, p \leq 0.01$); the desire for autonomy ($r = 0.473, p \leq 0.05$); the desire to control environment ($r = 0.716, p \leq 0.001$); the desire to grow and develop as a person ($r = 0.732, p \leq 0.001$); the desire to comprehend the purpose in life ($r = 0.637, p \leq 0.001$); the level of self-acceptance ($r = 0.472, p \leq 0.05$); and the level of actual psychological well-being ($r = 0.733, p \leq 0.001$).

Analysis of differences

Since the distribution of the obtained data is not normal, the non-parametric *U-Mann-Whitney* test was implemented to explore the differences. Significant differences ($p < 0.05$) were relieved only in one variable: "Autonomy". This component of actual psychological well-being is more pronounced in women.

Discussion

As a result of this study a theoretical analysis of research on contemporary approaches to psychological well-being and individual orientation was conducted and statistical analysis of relations between the variables run, conclusions formulated. Based on the analysis of modern understanding of the studied phenomena, conceptual models of psychological well-being and orientation framed by humanistic understanding [3; 4; 11; 13] as well as ideas proposed by [9] and [2] were chosen as the theoretical basis of this study. On the basis of previous research analysis, it was concluded that the relationship of meaningfulness of life and various aspects of positive functioning as a component of psychological well-being have not been in the focus of research and investigated enough [13]. Empirical data analysis revealed major characteristics of the study sample: the majority of the respondents demonstrated low levels of current psychological well-being, which is associated with negative affect predominance (frustration, unhappiness). The feeling of dissatisfaction with life can be caused by insufficient self-realization in specific life domains, understanding of not fitting to social environment and the inability to develop individuality [3]. The study showed that both men and women are mostly task-oriented, thus, the explanation provided by Rogers [3] can be employed. As a result, the answer to the first research question "Whether there is a link between psychological well-being and orientation of a person in early adulthood?" was obtained - there is a partial link. In men, statistically significant relationships between the levels of current psychological well-being and all three types of orientation were revealed. In women, statistically significant relations between current psychological well-being and interaction-orientation were not detected. These results indicate the lack of a certain kind of orientation of a person, both in men and women participating in the study; this can be related to low levels of self-awareness in the process of identity development. Thus, a positive answer to the second research question "Whether there is a link between psychological well-being components and orientation of a person in early adulthood?" was obtained - there is a partial link. The study revealed statistically significant negative relationships of all components of psychological well-being and self-orientation in the studied sample. The study also revealed statistically significant positive relationships of all components of psychological well-being and task-orientation in the studied sample. In men, there are statistically significant negative relationships between such components of psychological well-being as "Environment control" and "Desire to grow and develop as a person", and orientation to interaction.

Bass [17] associates self-orientation with such negative personality traits as hostility, irritability, aggressiveness, authoritativeness, the tendency to rivalry and confrontation. Interaction-orientation is understood as an attempt to maintain relationships with people at all means, even if it impedes actual work or support and leads to the dependence on the group, the need for emotional attachment and protection, indecisiveness, passivity [9]. Interaction-orientation is often inherent in people unsure in their skills and abilities to make decisions and influence and alter life circumstances.

The relationships revealed by this study confirm Rogers's [3] and Ryff's [11] ideas that the basic components of psychological well-being are the main positive personal characteristics of a fully functioning person, which are inherent in every human being. The performed frequency analysis revealed that men typically demonstrate low self-orientation at high scores of psychological well-being components. A common tendency for both men and women indicates average interaction-orientation at high scores in psychological well-being components. In addition, both men and women with high and average task-orientation have high scores in psychological well-being component scales. These findings support the above-mentioned theoretical positions of Rogers [19] indicating that high levels of the basic components of psychological well-being of an individual lead to self-realization in activities and achievements.

Conclusions

1. Psychometric characteristics of the questionnaires implemented in this study are acceptable in the current version: the Cronbach's alpha coefficient is 0.7. A statistically significant relation between psychological well-being and orientation of a person is detected in both men and women.
2. In men, statistically significant correlations between psychological well-being and all three types of orientation of an individual revealed (PB-NS: $r = -0.643$, $p \leq 0.001$; PB-ND: $r = 0.733$,

$p \leq 0.001$; PB-NO: $r = -0.447$, $p \leq 0.005$). In women, correlations only with self-orientation and task-orientation (PB-NS: $r = -0.718$, $p \leq 0.001$; PB-ND: $r = 0.783$, $p \leq 0.001$).

3. High levels of positive basic personality characteristics lead to task-orientation in the sample demonstrating predominance of dissatisfaction with their lives.
4. In the studied sample, task-orientation prevails in both men and women.
5. Analysis of psychological well-being components revealed differences between groups of men and women on "Autonomy" scale. Women in the sample are more independent and tend to rely more on their personal opinions and standards.
6. Percentage ratio analysis revealed that women demonstrate self-orientation more often than men.
7. Statistically significant relationships between all components of psychological well-being and orientation of a person revealed in both men and women.

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