Features of subjective well-being
of subjects of envy and rivalry

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In the article there are analyzed features of interrelations of subjective well-being with envious relation of personality and its disposition to a rivalry strategy. There are revealed essential distinctions in considered interrelations: the tendency to rivalry is interconnected with general satisfaction in the basic spheres of the subject’s life activity on cognitive level; disposition to envy, on the contrary, correlates with dissatisfaction in cognitive and emotional levels. There are revealed basic strategies of superiority leveling, determined by negative result of social comparison in correlation with considered phenomena of envy and rivalry. There are revealed features of subjective well-being in groups with various strategies of leveling of superiority of the other in significant spheres.

Key words: envy, rivalry, subjective well-being, social comparison.

In everyday life envy and rivalry (emulation, competition) often accompany each other at first sight and border between them is really almost uncaught – envy as if becomes a kind of sub-product of any competition. We should notice that the problem of correlation of envy and rivalry has rather long history of consideration. Since antiquity times (Hesiod, Aristotle, Plato) and ending the present (L.S. Arkhangelskaya, E.V. Zolotuhina-Abolina, E.P. Ilyin, I.B. Kotova, V.A. Labunskaya, K. Muzdibaev, E.E. Sokolova, G. Shek, etc.) this so ambiguous dyad causes numerous disputes among representatives of the socio-humanities, which essence, mainly, is concluded in search of answer of a question: «Whether envy can stimulate development of the person, act in a role of “the progress engine”?». In our opinion, the affirmative answer on this question it is possible to receive only positively having answered another: «whether envy is the desire to achieve what the other has?».

The analysis of definitions of envy presented in literature doesn’t approach us to the answer, owing to that explaining this phenomenon there is again an opposition between two strategies of leveling of superiority of the other: «to achieve» and «to bereave». 
«Envy is the feeling of disappointment caused by superiority, well-being of the other, desire to have what the other has» [14, p. 902].

«Envy is the feeling of disappointment or bitterness, arising in relation to the other person possessing any blessing or advantage, and accompanying by desire that he should lose them» [10, p. 89].

«Envy is the unfriendly-hostile feeling, arising when an individual has not got what the other person possesses and passionately wishes to have this object (this quality, this achievement, this success) or passionately wishes to bereave an object of envy of the other person» [9, p. 4].

In the first definition envy is manifested as desire to achieve, in the second – to bereave, in the third – to use both strategies, ether simultaneously, or depending on presence of resources for achievement (resources allow to «achieve», don't allow to «bereave»). As a reflection of terminological ambiguity there is also a two-directed idea about envy, occurring on the ordinary consciousness level: «<...> white envy» – motivation of achievement of personality when recognition of the other's success appears as a stimulus of creative activity and aspiration to competition. «<...> black envy» is negative emotion inducing the subject to make ill-intentioned actions on elimination of the other's success, well-being, pleasure» [12, p. 118]. Thus, it is terminological ambiguity in understanding of a phenomenon of envy that determines scientific discussions concerning its constructability. It is obvious that answer of a question about envy functions stimulating development of personality is predetermined by authors' initial ideas on its essence. The main problem consists in it.

In this connection we'll address to reflections of L.Y. Gozman, who focuses his attention on rather actual (if not the basic) psychology problem, saying that «Semiology of modern social psychology is exclusively multiple-valued. Some concepts used in scientific literature have not one, but several meanings, cover rather diverse aspects of reality. It is connected, first of all, with that many concepts, being simultaneously ordinary, are extended not only and not so much within the limits of science, but also in literary, and even in spoken language. <...> therefore, terminological difficulties which rise at carrying out of psychological researches are natural <...>» [5, 6].

Being defined in concepts, we should notice that as envy we understand «the hostile relation to the other person, determined by his superiority in significant spheres, accompanied by negative emotions having two-directed character (towards the other and towards self), and shown in desire to bereave him of this superiority directly or indirectly» [3, p. 22].

Speaking about rivalry, we should notice that for a long time and actively it functions at everyday level, but at the same time has no categorial status in psychological dictionaries. K.B. Kuznetsova, writes «that rivalry, having common connotations with the “competition” and “emulation” concepts, is intermediate between the open, contact form of rivalry as emulation and the concretized (subject) form of rivalry as competition.
<…> the “rivalry” concept has ambivalent character; rivalry has both positive meanings (activity, competiveness, achievement, success, victory), and negative (confrontation, enemy, opponent, person with spiteful intentions, envious person etc.)” [7, p. 9]. In our understanding rivalry can be based on the positive, partner, neutral relation to the other and to have constructive character, and also on sharply negative (hostile) one, getting thereby a destructive orientation. If in the first case the subject’s actions on purpose achievement are guided by desire to be better through imitation of an ideal based on benevolent relation to another, in the second case the aspiration to achieve is inevitably crossed with desire to do harm. Thus, as rivalry we understand a phenomenon functioning in a system of interpersonal and intergroup relations, defining model of personality’s behavior, characterized by focusing on «self» and aspiration to achieve satisfaction of interests in any ways.

Comprehending the analyzed phenomena in correlation with each other, we believe it is expedient to consider them within the limits of the social comparison theory, one of which effects is estimation of superiority of the other and its correlation with own successes and expenses. In result of such estimation and correlation there can be various relations and experiences corresponding to them. Comprehension of that the other surpasses the comparing subject in something can cause both envy, and desire to achieve the same in any ways. The similar thought was earlier stated by V.A. Labunskaya, analyzing envy, hopelessness and hope as ways of transformation of the subject’s being: «<…> In itself comparison and estimation can’t inevitably lead to both envy, and hope. But, in view of conclusions concerning a role of mechanisms of comparison and estimation in envy and hope actualization, it is necessary to raise the question about those socio-psychological variables of the person’s being, presented for him in various on modality and importance situations.
of communication, that can “transform” comparison into “active hope”, and estimation into expectation of the wished, into aspiration to achieve good results. Or they will lead to actualization of aspiration not only to prevent the superiority over self, but also to bereave, destroy that doesn’t belong to you, i.e. to “intolerable admiration – envy”» [8, p. 121].

The two-dimensional graphic model offered by us below (fig. 1) defines the position of envy and rivalry at comprehension of the other’s superiority in a sphere significant for the subject.

We should note that we realize the reference to a question on parities «envy – rivalry», «envy – motivation of achievement» not for the first time (the conducted earlier empirical researches [1, 2] point at absence of significant correlations between considered phenomena). However, improbably steady opinion (in science and everyday life) about stimulating, making active development of the person envy functions, forces us to continue similar researches. We suppose that revealing of personal, subject and socio-psychological determinants of disposition to envy and rivalry, will allow to comprehend the analyzed correlation in a new fashion. The rivalry variable in interface to envy deduces it on an active-effective level. In other words, rivalry (or its absence) characterizes the envious person as inclined to active leveling of superiority of the other, or on the contrary, having a passive-contemplate position. On the other hand, rivalry has also independent function – achievement function in which basis there are no imperatives of actions somehow damaging well-being of the Other.

In this sense the special place is devoted to a question of features of experience of subjective well-being of personality having either disposition. The problem consists in finding out in what degree and at what level of components or their constellations it is possible experience of well-being depending on a locus of personality in the presented two-dimensional model. Studying of this problem is especially important in the light of ideas of subjective well-being of personality and its psychological bases, especially regarding reflexivity and activity. Earlier we have shown that subjective well-being represents the integrated socio-psychological formation including estimation and the person’s relation to his life, to himself and having in itself an active beginning [11, 15]. At the same time, it acts as a mediating link between internal and external instances of personality, thereby defining its internal coordination.

As the earlier conducted researches [4] have allowed to find out that subjective well-being on the one hand is connected with an active position, and on another, – with envy (depending on its character, multi-directed), it is necessary to specify what are the features of experience of subjective well-being among persons experiencing the relations of envy, rivalry and a «boundary» zone of envy-rivalry.

The purpose of the present research is revealing of features of subjective well-being (both on cognitive, and on emotional levels) among subjects of envy and rivalry.
As methodical toolkit there have been used: «The technique of diagnostics of a social frustration level of L.I. Vasserman (in modification of V.V. Boiko)» [6]; «The scale of subjective well-being» (the adapted by M.V. Sokolova variant of the questionnaire of G. Perrudet-Badoux) [13]; «The technique of research of envious relation of personality» (T.V. Beskova) [3, p. 177–183]; the technique of K. Thomas «Behaviour in conflict situations» [11, p. 172–177] (a rivalry scale). Processing of results was carried out by means of the method of the correlation analysis and the method of comparison of average indexes by the t-Student criterion.

The general sample of the research consisted of 240 persons representing different socio-demographic groups (55 % of men, 45 % of women; an age interval 15–74 years (Mx = 27,48)).

At the first investigation phase there has been realized the correlation analysis of envious relation and rivalry with indexes of cognitive and emotional components of subjective well-being (tab. 1).

Table 1
The matrix of the correlations of envious relation and rivalry with subjective well-being

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics of dissatisfaction and subjective trouble</th>
<th>Envy</th>
<th>Rivalry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dissatisfaction in social achievements in the basic aspects of life activity (the cognitive component)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>education</td>
<td>0,131*</td>
<td>-0,023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mutual relations with colleagues</td>
<td>0,172**</td>
<td>-0,102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mutual relations with administration</td>
<td>0,200**</td>
<td>-0,094</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mutual relations with subjects of professional activity</td>
<td>0,134*</td>
<td>-0,027</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>contents of work</td>
<td>0,109</td>
<td>-0,094</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>conditions of professional work</td>
<td>0,118</td>
<td>-0,033</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>social status</td>
<td>0,261***</td>
<td>-0,025</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>financial status</td>
<td>0,100</td>
<td>-0,008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>domestic conditions</td>
<td>0,150*</td>
<td>-0,082</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>relations with the spouse</td>
<td>0,061</td>
<td>-0,054</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>relations with children</td>
<td>0,100</td>
<td>-0,041</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>relations with parents</td>
<td>0,063</td>
<td>-0,101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>conditions in society</td>
<td>0,015</td>
<td>-0,212**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>relations with friends</td>
<td>0,182**</td>
<td>-0,128*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Analyzing the correlations presented in the table 1, it is obviously possible to ascertain the following:

*envious relation* is positively interconnected, both with dissatisfaction in basic aspects of life activity (the cognitive component of subjective well-being), and with negative emotions (the affective component);

– *the tendency to rivalry* correlates only with the cognitive component of subjective well-being, moreover, this interrelation is negative.

Differently, if envy is accompanied by sensation of trouble, both on cognitive and on emotional levels, rivalry, on the contrary, is accompanied by satisfaction in basic spheres of life activity.

At the second stage of the empirical research for more detailed analysis of features of subjective well-being there have been distinguished four groups of respondents who differ on expressiveness of envious relation and rivalry, which different parities, in our opinion, define the basic strategy of leveling of the superiority of the other in a sphere significant for the subject.

**Group 1. Low level of envious relation and rivalry.** The aspiration to level the superiority of the other is absent. It can be expressed as neutral recognition of superiority (indifference), pleasure, admiration, «lazy dreams», sentimental regret.

**Group 2. Low level of envious relation and high level of rivalry.** Leveling of superiority of the other occurs through active actions on achievement of a desirable object (qual-
ity, ability), the subject aspires first of all to rise on a level of the person surpassing him («I want to have what he has»).

**Group 3. High level of envious relation and low level of rivalry.** Leveling of superiority of the other occurs not through raising of self on his level, but through bringing down of the object having certain superiority on own level («I want him not to have what he has»).

**Group 4. High level of envious relation and rivalry.** The strategy directed on liquidation of rupture between «me» and «the other» provides the combined actions on superiority elimination – «to achieve» and «to bereave» simultaneously.

Initially we have realized the comparative analysis of general indicators of cognitive and emotional components of subjective well-being between subjects with different correlation of envious relation and rivalry (tab. 2).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Compared characteristics</th>
<th>t-Student</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1–2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average index of dissatisfaction</td>
<td>1,88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General index of subjective trouble</td>
<td>-0,26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The note: where * – a significance value 0,05, ** – 0,01.

Ranging of average indexes of dissatisfaction in analyzed groups has shown that the most unsatisfied in basic spheres of life activity are persons with high level of envy and low level of rivalry (strategy «to bereave») (1,72). Further decreasingly there follow respondents with high level of envy and rivalry (strategy «to achieve and bereave») (1,64), with low level of envy and rivalry (absence of aspiration to superiority leveling) (1,55), with low level of envy and high level of rivalry (strategy «to achieve») (1,25). However, statistically significant distinctions are revealed only between the second and third groups: dissatisfaction of envious respondents is above than among respondents with expressed tendency to rivalry.

As to the emotional component of subjective well-being, in this case the emotional discomfort is most expressed among subjects of envy-rivalry (63,31), and least – among subjects with low indexes of envy and rivalry (45,7). Besides, statistically significant distinctions are revealed practically in all compared groups (except 1–2 and 3–4).

For more detailed studying we analyzed features of subjective well-being in groups with various strategies of leveling of superiority of the other in significant spheres (fig. 2).
Fig. 2. Features of subjective well-being in groups with various strategies of leveling of superiority of the other in significant spheres (the direction of arrows shows higher level of dissatisfaction at groups, from which the arrow proceeds)

Thus, at comparison of three groups with different strategies of leveling of superiority of the other, there are revealed following distinctions:

a) respondents with high level of envious relation surpass respondents with the tendency to rivalry in the general level of dissatisfaction on the cognitive and emotional levels. On the cognitive level their dissatisfaction is connected with the sphere of mutual relations (professional (at horizontal and vertical levels) and friendly) and the status characteristics influencing discontent in a way of life as a whole and in particular – in the leisure sphere. The defining characteristic of sensation of trouble at the emotional level is lack of close social communications;

b) respondents whose aspirations simultaneously combine in themselves strategies «to achieve» and «to bereave» (envy-rivalry) in comparison with respondents with the tendency to rivalry are characterized by higher dissatisfaction in some spheres of life activity (the general dissatisfaction at these groups doesn’t differ), and also prevalence of negative emotions (the emotional component of subjective well-being). In other words, the subject of envy-rivalry can be quite happy with his position, however, disposition to consider that someone has surpassed or can surpass him (not necessarily in a sphere of his satisfaction), definitely generates negative emotions (bad mood and state of health, pessimism, mistrust to people, isolation, etc.).
Special attention is deserved by the fact of absence of any distinctions at comparison of subjective well-being among subjects of envy and envy-rivalry.

By results of the empirical research it is obviously possible to formulate the following conclusions:

– it is not revealed the tendency to rivalry is interconnected with the general satisfaction in basic spheres of life activity of the subject on the cognitive level, interrelations with the emotional component and aspiration to achieve the purposes by all means. Disposition to envy, on the contrary, correlates with dissatisfaction, both on the cognitive and emotional levels;

– in a level of emotional comfort subjects with expressed tendency to rivalry (strategy «to achieve») surpass subjects experiencing envy, both in a «pure kind», and with rivalry elements. Whereas in satisfaction in basic aspects of life activity they surpass only envious persons, not aspiring to the other’s level superiority by own achievements, and seeing an exit from such unfairly occurred situation only in deprivation (directly or indirectly) of the other of this superiority;

– subjects of envy and envy-rivalry don’t differ on a level of subjective well-being that allows to assume that, being in an area of crossing, envy-rivalry incorporates envy characteristics, rather than rivalry.

Thus, the envious do not reach an optimum level of subjective well-being neither at contemplate, nor at active position; their aspiration to level superiority of the other doesn’t lead to expected satisfaction. Dissatisfaction of personality of a certain type only strengthens its envious relation, becoming a stimulus of search (or active leveling of superiority) of envy object. It doesn’t mean that the envying and undertaking efforts concerning an object of envy is satisfied in nothing. However the complete picture of subjective well-being among these persons isn’t built that in conditions of psychotherapy demands rendering assistance in change of relation to self and to the other, to own and the other’s success.

References