



THE YOUNG SCHOLARS

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Features and problems of studying of subjective well-being in modern psychological researches

In the article there are resulted some problems connected with methodological aspects of research of a phenomenon of subjective well-being. The analysis of native and foreign researches has allowed to reveal that to the most widespread they concern the complexities at attempt of separation of subjective well-being from close concepts, the restrictions arising at a choice of diagnostic toolkit, necessity of account of social and cultural context at the research construction, some restrictions at the subjective well-being concept's application to children and teenagers.

Keywords: *subjective well-being, psychological well-being, happiness experience, personal growth, problems of the subjective well-being research, subjective well-being of children and teenagers.*

The urgency of this research is caused, on the one hand, by increase of the modern experts' interest to a problem of subjective well-being, on the other – by presence of some complexities at research of this phenomenon; both at studying of theoretical aspects of the problematics, and at construction and realization of empirical research. The analysis of numerous native and foreign scientific publications has allowed to systematize features of the research of subjective well-being and to formulate the basic problems which are necessary for considering at research construction.

One of the most obvious and, at the same time, not resolved problems concerns separation of the “subjective well-being” concept from close and related concepts, such as psychological well-being, personal growth, happiness experience, and also differences of scientific and ordinary understanding of this phenomenon.

The content of the “well-being” concept practically coincides in scientific disciplines and ordinary consciousness, well-being and feeling of well-being are significant for the subjective world of personality. There are objective indicators of well-being, such as criteria of success, indicators of health, material prosperity, etc., but, at the same time, well-being experience is appreciably caused by features of person's relations to self, world around in whole and to its separate parties. That is, personality's well-being is inherently, first of all, subjective, and well-being experience is influenced by various aspects of the person's life, in it there are combined many features of the person's relation to self and to the world around.



In the researches, presented for last decade in scientific periodicals, subjective well-being is considered as an independent definition approaches to which vary depending on a theoretical position of a researcher and problems on which decision a research is directed. For example, N. Bradburn, describing the content and structure of subjective well-being, pays attention that a considerable role in definition of this phenomenon there plays a parity of positively negatively colored affects, and distinction between positive and negative affects defines the general sensation of satisfaction in life and experience of well-being [9]. D. Shek opens psychological well-being through such components as experience of hopelessness (hope), own skill, satisfaction in life and self-respect [15].

E. Diener considers a three-componential structure of subjective well-being into which there enters satisfaction, pleasant emotions and unpleasant emotions. According to E. Diener, subjective well-being includes cognitive estimation of various aspects of life and emotional self-acceptance, and experience of subjective well-being is comparable to experience of happiness [10]. C.D. Ryff has generalized and has distinguished six basic components of psychological well-being – the positive relation to self and own antecedents, relations with others, penetrated by care and trust, ability to follow own beliefs, ability to fulfill the requirement of everyday life (competence), presence of purposes and employment giving a sense to life, feeling of continuous development and self-realization [14].

R.M. Shamionov considers subjective well-being as the state of dynamic balance reached by multidirectional experiences of satisfaction in various spheres of life activity [8]. According to his researches, as the major parametre in the well-being structure there acts the accessory to a group, and subjective well-being itself possesses a powerful active source. The similar thought sounds in the work of O.S. Savelieva considering subjective well-being as an integrated social-psychological formation which includes the person's relation to self and own life, and also carries in itself an active source causing constant search of self, self-development, aspiration to self-realization [7].

Thus, subjective well-being is defined by researchers differently, but it is possible to distinguish some common positions. Subjective well-being is connected with emotional balance and prevalence of positively colored emotions, moods which, finally, develop into the experience of general satisfaction in life. Subjective well-being mentions the person's relation to self and includes self-respect feeling, continuous development and self-realization. Relations with other people, penetrated by care and trust, efficiency of interpersonal interaction, feeling of accessory to a group also concern the subjective well-being phenomenon.

L.V. Kulikov, considering a number of components of well-being of personality – social, spiritual, material, physical, – as an object of research offers psychological well-being which he defines as coordination of mental processes and functions, sensation of integrity, internal balance [6].

For characteristic of a state of the person's subjective world in aspect of its usefulness besides the well-being term some authors also use such terms as experience



(sensation) of happiness, emotional comfort, satisfaction in life. The "happiness" concept unites some complex of ideals of human life. Happiness acts as the value having special importance; that is as the value which is above other values. I.A. Dzhidarian investigated representations about happiness, characteristic for ordinary consciousness, and has shown that unlike other human values, happiness has no self-sufficient and self-well-founded essence in the sense that "contains and somehow "passes" through all other values, being "illuminated" by them, being a result, a "by-product" of their realizations" [3, p. 48]. M. Argail, according to G. Kaprara, in the book "Psychology of happiness" seldom uses this concept, but, nevertheless, defines it as comprehension of own satisfaction in life or as a frequency and intensity of positive emotions [1, 5].

S.L. Bratchenko, M.R. Mironova, in consideration of a problem of personal growth, distinguish its intrapersonal and interpersonal criteria. Being based at works of K. Rodgers, to the first ones they have carried acceptance of self, openness to internal experience of experiences, understanding of self, responsible freedom, integrity, dynamism. To the interpersonal criteria of personal growth there were carried acceptance and understanding of others, social capacity (aspiration to constructive social mutual relations) and creative adaptability (concerning life problems) [2]. This position puts forward a problem of correlation of the "subjective well-being" and "personal growth" concepts owing to considerable similarity at definition of their content. In particular, interpsychic criteria of personal growth completely correlate with components of subjective well-being listed in native publications.

Thus, there are considerable difficulties at attempt to make such definition to the "subjective well-being" concept which would allow to level resemblance with common concepts and to concretize the phenomenon content.

The following problem is designated by G. Kapara who speaks about possible difficulties in need of estimation of connection between well-being and personal indices as in techniques of estimation of the both constructs there are similar questions on sense that creates problems at their comparison. In particular, G. Kapara notices that the request to estimate own happiness can be met in well-being questionnaires (for example, Diener & Diener, 1995), and in extraversion estimation techniques (Costa & McCrae, 1992). Such often meeting coincidence of questions can make impossible the revealing of relations between personal constructs that causes necessity to concern to construction of similar researches with a considerable share of care [5].

The question of the character of application of the concept of psychological well-being in relation to children is also problematic. In particular, V. Morrow and B. Mayall cite the data that young men are worried about expectation of adults of that they should be happy all the time. Besides, it is rather ambiguous the popular belief that the overwhelming majority of children, related to levels of population with low economic well-being, are in overwhelming majority unfortunate and more than others are subject to stress [12].



The following serious problem which should be considered at the research of subjective well-being is that in works it is rather often missed the value of cultural and social context, when their influence proves to be true, for example, by the fact that economic development and growth of well-being of the western society for half-centuries has not caused essential increase of the level of psychological well-being. According to S. Carlisle and P. Hanlon, published in 2007, psychological well-being of people has raised within two decades after the Second World War and then remained invariable (cite after 8). According to K. Zagursky, it is necessary to make a differentiation between perception or expectations concerning material life conditions and material welfare which is usually defined as psychological feeling of satisfaction, however economists, as a rule, do not consider this definition exact [4]. Researches prove existence of moderate correlation between actual material living conditions, including incomes, and satisfaction in these conditions [11]. K. Zagursky assumes that on satisfaction in material conditions the defining influence there renders the relative perception of life conditions based on reference perception which can be based, in turn, on knowledge of life condition of some reference groups, or life conditions in the past and prospects on the future.

Thus, despite the researchers' interest to a problem of subjective well-being, and also on available scientific reserve in this area and a significant number of scientific publications, there exists a number of problems demanding account of various aspects of the phenomenon of subjective well-being at studying. There are among them:

- absence of definition of subjective well-being completely which would allow to exclude duplication of its content by similar concepts, such as psychological well-being, happiness experience, personal growth, etc.;
- imperfection of the methodical toolkit, which design features complicate estimation of connection between subjective well-being personal indicators;
- insufficient substantiation of possibility of application of the concept of subjective well-being concerning children and absence of the researches devoted to studying of features of development and formation of subjective well-being at children's age;
- absence in researches of subjective well-being of the social and cultural context rendering, in certain cases, considerable influence on a level of the person's satisfaction in life conditions.

Certainly, the distinguished problems are somehow decided by researchers, however it is significant their complex account at decision of various theoretical and practical problems connected with various aspects of the subjective well-being problematic.

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