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**LIFE-PURPOSE ORIENTATIONS PECULIARITIES OF
ADOLESCENTS WITH RISKY BEHAVIOUR**

T. A. Popova (a)*, E.V. Lavrova (b), N.V. Kiselnikova (c), J.V. Evdokimova (d)

*Corresponding author

(a) Laboratory of Psychotherapy and Counseling Psychology FGBNU «PI RAE», Mokhovaya str., 9-4, Moscow, Russia, elenia2@yandex.ru

(b) PhD, Senior Researcher at Laboratory of Psychotherapy and Counseling Psychology FGBNU «PI RAE», Mokhovaya str., 9-4, Moscow, Russia may_day@list.ru

(c) PhD, Head of Laboratory of Psychotherapy and Counseling Psychology FGBNU «PI RAE», Mokhovaya str., 9-4, Moscow, Russia, nv_psy@mail.ru

(d) Master of Psychology, Consultant, Klimentovsky pereulok, 6

Abstract

The article addresses research on life-purpose orientations peculiarities of adolescents with risky behaviour. The diagnostic research carried out on a sample of 117 people using 4 evaluation procedures (“Risk propensity questionnaire” by A.G. Shmelev, Questionnaire by V.E. Chudnovsky “About meaning of life”, “Life-purpose orientations test” by DA Leontiev, Viability test by S.Muddy (adapted by D.A. Leontiev) confirmed the hypothesis that the personal value-meaning sphere of adolescents with destructive risky behaviour is not sufficiently formed in comparison with those interested in healthy lifestyle, sports and additional educational activities. This fact indicates that adolescents take unconscious risk as a result of underestimated influence of their actions on future. Besides diagnostic research, the information concerning possible preventive work with adolescents demonstrating destructive forms of risky behaviour with the help of logo art prevention is provided in the article. This method combines art-therapy and logotherapy. Combining creative and verbal activities helps an adolescent to become aware of the way he expresses himself and the way it influences another person or a group. A significant emphasis is made on the fact that a person has free will to choose an attitude to his own life, the values to put a priority on and can be responsible for his choice. Although logo art prevention program is already being applied successfully in psychological practice with youth, this research shows that it is necessary to make corrections to the program for the adolescents demonstrating destructive forms of risky behaviour.

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1. Introduction

From the point of view of adolescence and juvenile psychology, risky situation is an inevitable part of personal development. The reason for that is natural sources of frustration fixing an adolescent in the permanent state of uncertainty. These sources can be theoretically divided into internal and external ones. External sources are determined by the factors of age and social situation of development.

- Self-concept fluctuations, self-esteem and self-awareness instability
- Difficulties in learning social and ethical norms due to reference groups expansion and contradiction in their rules and norms
- Sociodemographic factors
- Contemporary historico-cultural social period

Internal sources are individual personal psychological traits and general characteristics of the given ontogenetic period, external factors include degree of task complexity, impact produced by the situation and intergroup communication character. This means that an adolescent and a youth almost permanently acts in the situation of uncertainty, as he has no knowledge about adult life, assimilating this complicated for him dynamic balance in the organism-environment system by trial and error method.

Therefore, late adolescence and early juvenility is an important period for life-purpose orientations formation, which is a basis for a strong and stable self-concept. Contemporary “risk society” creates an unstable and inconsistent background for growing up and developing of a present-time adolescent and a youth, making natural for this age issues of self-identification and value orientations formation more complicated. That leads to the necessity to develop additional measures.

Risk-taking behaviour is normal for the period of adolescence, it is determined by contemporary historico-cultural period of social development. Risky behaviour as opposed to deviant behaviour implies possibility to choose a form of behaviour by an adolescent (Wolfe et al., 2006). There are constructive and destructive forms of risky behaviour. The aim of constructive risk-taking behaviour is self-understanding and self-perfection of an adolescent and a youth, being aware of his life’s value, while destructive risky behaviour is aimed at destroying objects of the outside world and/or self-destruction and can lead to irreparable consequences. Numerous studies indicate a risky behaviour that harms the life and health of adolescents (Irwin, 2006). Destructive risky behaviour is determined by a complex cause-effect integrity (Yu, 2017).

Theoretical result of the research is general conclusion that the degree of risk-taking behaviour intensity depends on the ability of an adolescent to bear the state of uncertainty and frustration. Risky behaviour is a natural result of psychological tension (Yu, 2017). What helps an adolescent and a youth to bear frustration is informational education and support of social environment (Ozer, 2011). Therefore, practical result of the research was development of a wide range of preventive measures for adolescents and youth, applied on the national level.

The appropriate prevention procedure can be logoartprevention method (Popova, 2017), developed on the basis of logo art-therapy (Sitzer, 2015), certified by Marianne da Silva Prado in 2001. Logo art therapy combines ideas of logotherapy (existential analysis) of Viktor Frankl and anthroposophical art therapy by Margarethe Haushka. The aim of logo art therapy is to help a person in finding meaning using logo art therapy techniques. Logo art prevention unlike logo art therapy is aimed not at healing, but at

providing psychological support and care. The work with personal life values system is combined with creative activity. Logo art prevention includes 2 parts:

- Creative non-verbal part based on Purpose-in-life orientations. Main means of self-expression are drawing, painting, model. Other non-verbal means of self-expression are also used: voice, body, mime and gestures.
- Verbal structured part. The work of art is interpreted by an adolescent himself, associative flow is applied for revealing life purpose objects.

Logo art prevention has already been successfully used for adolescents and youth by T.A. Popova in the project “Life meaning and destiny. How to build your own future?” created under her leadership in 2012, based at FGBNU “PI RAE”. The project showed good results in forming attitude to life as an integral life space. Awareness of one’s own self helps to form self-reflexion, making creative product generates emotional reactions, makes the process of life purpose orientations formation more active and direct.

2. Problem Statement

Our study deals with a phenomenon of adolescents’ risk-taking behaviour and its correlation with life purpose orientations. This connection allows to plan aimed measures for prevention and correction of destructive risk forms by means of logo art prevention methods. The difference between the notions „deviant behavior“ and „risky behaviour” is emphasised in the research.

Risky behaviour implies the possibility to choose a form of behaviour by an adolescent and a youth, which can be approved or unapproved by society, basing on this choice we distinguish constructive and destructive risk types.

We suppose that logo art prevention has the capacity for correction of risky behaviour in adolescents and youth, including its destructive forms.

The results of this research, including educational experiment experience, can become the basis for targeted preventive program development.

3. Research Questions

- Adolescents with risky behaviour elements are characterized by smaller degree of life purpose orientations formation in comparison with the group of adolescents where risky behaviour was not revealed.
- Application of logo art prevention method for adolescents with destructive risky behaviour will have special features.

4. Purpose of the Study

To examine peculiarities of life purpose orientations of adolescents and youth with risky behaviour in order to plan targeted preventive measures.

5. Research Methods

5.1. Participants

127 adolescents aged 15-19 took part in the research. They were divided into 2 groups:

- The 1st group – 57 adolescents aged 15-19, studying in GBPOU “Polytechnical college No.2”. Adolescents of the 1st group were admitted to this college upon the recommendation of psycho-educational council of educational institutions (high schools), where they studied before, as they were acknowledged as “troubled teenagers” – having problems with academic achievements, discipline, showing affective behaviour.
- The 2nd group – 60 adolescents aged 15-19 (members of the communities “GTO students in MIET” and “Olympiads for high school students”) without any detected signs of risky behaviour.

5.2. Instrument

- “Risk propensity questionnaire” by A.G. Shmelev
- Questionnaire by V.E. Chudnovsky “About meaning of life”
- “Life-purpose orientations test” by DA Leontiev (LPO)
- Viability test by S. Muddy (adapted by D.A. Leontiev)
- Logo art prevention program
- Free observation during testing and logo art prevention classes in order to detect elements of destructive risk and reveal peculiarities of work with adolescents demonstrating risky behaviour.

5.3. Procedure

- Testing and data processing by qualitative and quantitative methods.
- Statistical data analysis, including descriptive statistics of groups, comparison of groups by Mann-Whitney U test and correlation analysis within groups (Spearman correlation coefficient).
- Logo art prevention classes.

Data collection in the first group was carried out on the territory of GBPOU “Polytechnical college No.2”. This process included 5 meetings for a total of about 15 hours.

Empirical data collection in the 2nd group was made by the same test techniques using distant information technologies (internet testing).

After empirical data collection the results were processed by means of qualitative and quantitative methods, the groups were compared with each other.

Then an educational experiment using logo art prevention was carried out for adolescents with risky behaviour.

6. Findings

The main distinctive feature of the 1st group (students of GBPOU Polytechnical college No.2) was a high level of test sabotage. We did not consider the data of sabotaged tests or sabotaged scale, but all

the other information concerning sabotaging respondents was included in the analysis. In the 2nd group nobody sabotaged participation in the procedure.

The first instrument for test data processing was descriptive statistic.

Risk propensity questionnaire by AG Shmelev allows to detect risky personal traits and decisiveness in taking risk. Data analysis showed that there are differences between the group 1 and group 2 in the tendency for risk taking propensity. The group 1 demonstrates higher degree of adventurousism and decisiveness in taking risk (average value – 20.11). Data scattering in this group is not significant (4.091), this fact indicates that this tendency is quite strong and homogenous. The group 2 is less prone to adventurousism and decisiveness in taking risk (15.89). Values variation in this group is 2 times higher than in group 1, that indicates to a smaller level of data homogeneity, nevertheless, the highest values in this group only reach average values in group 1. The general tendency in group 2 witnesses for low level of risk propensity of the respondents and their more cautious behaviour.

Viability test by Muddy showed the following results. See Table 1.

Table 01. The results of descriptive comparison, Viability test by S. Muddy

Scale name	Arithmetic mean group 1	Arithmetic mean group 2	Standard deviation group 1	Standard deviation group 2
Involvement	30,98	38,12	9,27	10,85
Control	29,05	23,93	7,27	15,79
Acceptance of risk	15,64	20,26	4,44	5,91
Viability	75,62	82,32	17,87	20,71

The study result indicates that it is more difficult for male adolescents from GBPOU “Polytechnical College No. 2” (group 1) to enjoy their activity. They experience feeling of exclusion and resistance of the environment. General level of viability is also low, this reflects the absence of well-balanced basis of value-meaning sphere. Nevertheless, the respondents have a significant desire to control their lives and are sure about positive impact of struggle on aim achieving. The result obtained in the 2nd group shows that adolescents and youth appreciate their activity much, demonstrate more readiness to be involved in a new unknown experience, owing to the belief that whatever happens leads to development and self-understanding. Respondents of this group are resilient to stress. It is remarkable that the members of this group are less inclined to control their lives achieving their goals by an act of will.

Table 02. Results of descriptive comparison, Life-purpose orientations test by D.A. Leontiev

Scale name	Arithmetic mean group 1	Arithmetic mean group 1	Standard deviation group 1	Standard deviation group 2
General life meaning	93,26	107,02	21,083	17,09
Purposes in life	27,46	24,21	8,62	9,34
Life process	27,11	31,39	7,26	6,15
Life productivity	24,57	28,96	5,85	3,68
Locus of control - self	19,43	19,88	4,69	5,1
Locus of control - life	26,54	29,14	8,57	8,13

The results of descriptive comparison using LPO test by D.A. Leontiev (see table 2) show that general life meaning is higher in group 2. This index has very low values in group 1. It indicates the tendency of insufficient life meaning orientations formation. As the value of this scale is comprised of the values of all the other scales, let us analyse the scales values in groups. Tendencies in the 1st group suggest that the respondents find their life meanings mostly in future. At the same time, they find less meanings in present, as well as in the results achieved in the past, in their self-realization. Basing on these data a paradox of life meaning orientations appears: greater reliance of respondents on future, at the same time not enough meaning is given to past and present. The 2nd group, unlike the 1st one, is characterized by a weaker tendency to find life meanings in future, at the same time the respondents are more involved in the present, demonstrating greater interest to the current events. There are also meanings in the past, the respondents are satisfied with their self-realization and appreciate the elapsed period of life. It is natural that the adolescents and youth of the 2nd group have stronger feeling of ability to control their lives.

The questionnaire by V.E. Chudnovsky allows to assess the main meaning categories of respondents. In the 1st group the largest number of meanings were detected in status (average value = 3.77), communicative (3.72) and family (4.12) categories. Existential and altruistic categories are presented in a smaller degree in comparison with the 2nd group. In the 2nd group meanings in life are detected in existential (4.67), altruistic (4.54) and self-realization (4.05) categories.

Spearman correlation analysis was applied for more profound study of life-purpose orientations of adolescents with risky behaviour in order to reveal the hierarchy of characteristics within groups. Spearman correlation coefficients between the scales of Viability test by S. Muddy, LPO test and the questionnaire by V.E. Chudnovsky for the 1st group confirm the main conclusions about central tendencies in group 1, made in descriptive statistics, and insufficient general value-meaning sphere formation is a result of overestimation of one type of life meaning positions and lack of the others. The result for the 2nd group also confirmed the described central tendencies, formulated as a result of descriptive statistics analysis in group 2.

To detect significant and valid statistics while comparing 2 samples with each other, Mann-Whitney U test was used (see table 3).

Table 03. Mann-Whitney U test study results

Scale name	Rank in group 1	Rank in group 2	Test value	Significance level
Age	58,27	59,69	1668,5	0,815
Risk propensity value	64,52	44,36	831,5**	p≤0,01
Involvement	48,11	67,07	1106**	p≤0,01
Control	64,06	52,44	1316,5	0,062
Risk taking	43,92	70,91	875,5**	p≤0,01
Viability	53,01	62,58	1375,5	0,124
General life meaning	42,09	62,25	855**	p≤0,01
Purposes in life	60,08	48,46	1077,5	0,054
Process of life	44,39	60,48	961**	p≤0,01
Life productivity	39,62	64,14	741,5**	p≤0,01
Locus of control - self	52,17	54,52	1319	0,697
Locus of control - life	48,6	57,26	1154,5	0,15
Communicative categories	60,14	57,92	1645	0,721
Status categories	68,61	49,88	1162,5**	p≤0,01
Family categories	60,21	57,85	1641	0,703
Self-realization categories	51,17	66,44	1263,5*	p≤0,05
Cognitive category	62,66	55,53	1501,5	0,252
Altruistic category	49,12	68,38	1147**	p≤0,01
Existential categories	49,84	67,7	1188**	p≤0,01

* – p<0,01; ** – p<0,05

The results of comparative study of values obtained by using Risk propensity questionnaire by AG Shmelev confirm the hypothesis that the students of GBPOU “Polytechnical college No.2” are inclined to taking risk, they show adventurous character traits and decisiveness more often. The result of this study also correlates to the detected central tendency result in descriptive statistics and leads to the conclusion that insufficiently formed value-meaning sphere correlates to destructive risk-taking behaviour in adolescence and youth. The group of students belonging to the communities “GTO students in MIET” and “Olympiads for high-school students” can be characterized as cautious and less inclined to taking risk.

It was originally planned that the next stage of study should be logo art prevention program for the students of GBPOU “Polytechnical college No.2”. But we faced some difficulties that are important to be taken into consideration while planning preventive work with adolescents demonstrating destructive forms of risky behaviour. The students were divided into 2 groups: the 1st group was to take part in research -educational project “Life meaning and destiny. How to build your own future?”, and the 2nd group – in the preventive program at their educational institution. But there were difficulties in both cases. Organizational difficulties and troublesome behaviour led to interruption of the program at Polytechnical college. Only initially motivated adolescents with more adaptive forms of behavior (10 people out of 57 who had been tested) were involved in the research-educational project “Life meaning and destiny. How to build your own future?” However, in the process of program realization the number of participants decreased. This result showed that a new approach, based on analysis of all diagnostic procedures, is to be developed for work with adolescents demonstrating destructive forms of risky behaviour. Adolescents in this sample require more care, support and persistence of the group leaders. It appears very important to demonstrate more effective communication models and the possibility to obtain love, support and attention through constructive forms of risk-taking.

7. Conclusion

Creating of the necessary programs at the national level, educational work with parents and teachers, taking into account psychological peculiarities of adolescents should be an important stage of risky behaviour prevention.

Successful educational experiment with a group of adolescents demonstrating risky behaviour remains a promising approach. Adaptation of logo art prevention program for adolescents with risky behaviour basing on the research results gives hope for positive changes in the future. The program allows to highlight the possibility to choose a form of risky behaviour, to help in obtaining new knowledge and experience and give a constructive way of self-exploration and self-presentation in life.

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