

PSYRGGU 2020

Psychology of Personality: Real and Virtual Context

TEMPORARY PERSPECTIVE, WELL-BEING OF TEENAGERS LEARNING AT CLOSED INSTITUTIONS DURING THE PANDEMIC

Larisa Y. Maksimova (a), Lyubov A. Grigorovich (b)*, Marina V. Kurenkova (c)

*Corresponding author

(a) Moscow All-Girls Boarding School of the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation, Moscow, Russia

(b) Russian State University for the Humanities, str. Chayanova, 15, Moscow, Russia, l250762@inbox.ru

(c) Moscow All-Girls Boarding School of the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation, Moscow, Russia

Abstract

Relevant indicators of well-being, activity, mood have been identified; subgroups characterized by high, medium and low levels of emotional well-being, external and internal locus of control and different perceptions of the time perspective have been identified. The scientific study of well-being and time perspective in specific social conditions caused by a pandemic requires urgent attention; the importance of adolescence in the formation of personal responsibility and ideas about professional self-realization is emphasized. The results of an empirical study of the well-being, activity, locus control and the time perspective of older teenage girls living and studying in an educational institution of the boarding type (Moscow boarding school for girls of the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation) are presented. The obtained data allows us to determine to what extent the emotional well-being of respondents is associated with the localization of responsibility for the events in their lives in various fields: study, family and interpersonal relations, and their health.

2357-1330 © 2020 Published by European Publisher.

Keywords: Activity, externality, internality, teenager, time perspective, well-being.



1. Introduction

The modern world undergoes significant psychological, economic and social transformations. The new COVID-19 virus, with its high virulence and the magnitude of its distribution, has set new challenges to join our effort in the struggle to preserve human lives and rebuild social relations.

It is quite obvious that during the course of and after the end of the pandemic we will encounter many socio-psychological and personality phenomena that will undergo thorough scientific analysis and reflection. A number of changes are already visible today, for example, forced social self-isolation transforms relations, raises anxiety, and affects the time perspective.

The limitation of social contacts, the minimization of the interchangeability of perceived images of the outside world, impoverishes the sensory life of a modern person who is used to perceiving a rich and diverse world, which leads to sensory hunger and loss of perceptual activity.

A large-scale self-isolation is a forced, externally given way of organizing one's life, which means that many people hold on to external, rather than internal, motives. Obviously, adhering to the self-isolation regime for such people requires more internal control and an effort of will, which, accumulating in conditions of prolonging the self-isolation regime, leads to more frequent breakdowns, aggressive and/or depressive states.

In addition, in all mass media, the theme of coronavirus infection occupies the leading position in the news programmes and is strongly presented in social advertising, which supports the idea of a large-scale disease as a "figure" of perception at the level of individual consciousness, as a result of which the picture of the world and the internal picture of the health of most people are transformed. The internal picture of health, like any other part of self-awareness, presupposes a system of self-image of the real self and the ideal self. It is the gap between these two systems of representations that is the resource of self-development of a particular person (Grigorovich & Kachalina, 2019). With such imbalance of self-image about the real self and the ideal self, access to this resource becomes difficult.

In this regard, a special scientific interest should be paid to the question of the psychological state of those for whom the restriction of social contacts is an established norm. Students in educational institutions of the boarding type fall into this category.

2. Problem Statement

The personality of a teenager, the characteristics and dynamics of his development are in the focus of a large number of studies in the field of developmental and educational psychology. In such studies a marked high level of internal inconsistency and complexity of development is common while there may be difference in the emphasis on psychic neoplasms, the reasons causing the specifics of social and personal development at this stage of ontogenesis.

One of the central psychic neoplasms of the teenage crisis is a sense of maturity, which is expressed in the desire for freedom, independence, in the affirmation of one's personal dignity. The works of D.B. Elkonin, T.V. Dragunova, I.V. Dubrovina, T.D. Martsinkovskaya and other Russian psychologists who studied the process of formation of a sense of adulthood, showed that it is of great importance for personality formation, and helps a teenager enter new role relationships. At the same time, the recognition of his

independence, his equal rights with adults is much more important for a teenager than their actual realization. A characteristic feature of adolescence is a high need for self-knowledge. Comparison of oneself with others, finding similarities and differences with peers is one of the mechanisms of understanding one's self.

Changes occurring in adolescence are one of the most significant throughout the development of personality. Towards the end of adolescence, the formation of a differentiated and conscious "self-concept" as a system of internally coordinated self-representations takes place.

Not only does the content of the "real self" and "ideal self" play important part for personal development, but also the gap between them, which affects the emotional component of the "self-concept" and the teenager's self-esteem. When the discrepancy is huge, the resulting incongruence causes the idea that the "ideal- self" is impossible to attain and as a consequence, it can lead to a feeling of frustration, anxiety, self-doubt, depression, defensive aggression and so on. If the ideal – self seems quite achievable, it starts acting as an internal incentive (motivation) for development, helps to build adequate ways to achieve the goals, forms the ability to self-development, self-education, self-realization.

The high emotional excitability which is characteristic of adolescence enhances the sensitivity of adolescents to negative reactions of adults, to their own failure, external unattractiveness (often fictitious and partially associated with rapid growth and maturation and resulting imbalances). This makes their self-esteem especially unstable, situational, increases the likelihood of difficulties in communication, deviations in behavior.

Many researchers involved in adolescent psychology notice a change in the temporal perspective that occurs at this stage of ontogenesis, its expansion towards the distant future. At the same time, a plan of the life path begins to be built, with which the hierarchy of motives forming the qualities of the personality is linked. One of the most basic directions of life planning is the choice of a future profession and the transition to another level of the educational system - vocational education.

During a pandemic, fears of an economic and professional future become actualized. The labor market undergoes significant changes, employers streamline processes reducing the number of employees and wages, it leads to a change in the time perspective and pessimistic forecasts regarding their future, as well as at the stage of professional self-determination and the choice of profession.

It is advisable to pay special attention to educational institutions of the boarding type, an example of such type is Moscow boarding school for girls of the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation which successfully implements a vocational guidance program made up for high school pupils. The program has been developed taking into account the personal and psychophysiological characteristics of the girls and it is aimed at creating constructive ideas about the possibilities of self-actualizations by means of the profession.

3. Research Questions

The question of experiencing stress connected with mass restrictions and the threat to life is one of the little-studied questions to which psychologists, despite their unconditional relevance, cannot give a definite answer. Although there is a fairly large amount of data from ongoing research, the question, however, remains open. The key issue of our study was the purpose of the study is to analyze the current

emotional state of older teenagers in relation to their perception of the time perspective in relation to their perception of the time perspective in a pandemic.

4. Purpose of the Study

Recognizing the obvious environmental impact on the formation of the time perspective and the emotional well-being of adolescents in conditions of high social stress caused by the spread of COVID-19, we suggest that, under the conditions of the boarding principle of living and organizing a psychologically safe space, there are no significant changes in the emotional stress and time perspective of adolescents will be observed.

5. Research Methods

5.1. Selection

The study involved 198 pupils of the ninth and tenth grades studying in the boarding school for girls of the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation (Moscow). Most of them are daughters of Russian officers from remote military garrisons, including single-parent and large families, daughters whose parents were killed while performing their military duty, namely military personnel and combatants who were awarded state awards. The study was conducted in the spring of 2020 in Moscow.

5.2. Survey Methods

The research methodology was comprehensive and included three questionnaires: The test of differentiated self-assessment of the functional state “Well-being, activity, mood” (WAM), the test for determining the level of subjective control (LSC), the P. Zimbardo questionnaire of time perspective.

▪ The test of differentiated self-assessment of the functional state “Well-being, activity, mood” (WAM) was developed by employees of I.M. Sechenov First Moscow Medical Institute and is intended for the quick assessment of well-being, activity and mood (Doskin et al., 1973). The first letters of these functional states make up the name of the questionnaire. When developing the methodology, the authors proceeded from the fact that the three main components of a functional psychoemotional state - well-being, activity and mood - can be characterized by polar assessments, between which there is a continuous sequence of intermediate values. The task is to correlate the subject’s condition with a number of signs on a multi-stage scale. The scale consists of indices (3210123) and is located between thirty pairs of words of the opposite meaning, reflecting mobility, speed and pace of the flow of functions (activity), strength, health, fatigue (well-being), as well as characteristics of the emotional state (mood). The subject should select and mark the figure that most accurately reflects his condition at the time of the examination. Distribution of answers occurs by key. In the course of evaluation, the respondent estimates are transcoded as follows: index 3, which corresponds to poor health, low activity and bad mood, is taken as 1 point; the next index 2 - for 2; index 1 - for 3 points and so on to index 3 on the opposite side of the scale, which is accordingly taken as 7 points. It is important to note that the poles of the scale change, positive states always get high scores, and negative ones get low scores. The obtained scores allow us to calculate the general indicator of the functional psychoemotional state, both arithmetic average and its individual components:

activity, well-being and mood. The sum obtained on each scale makes it possible to identify the functional state of the individual at a given time in accordance with the assigned points: high, medium or low levels.

▪ The test for determining the Level of Subjective Control (LSC) has been developed on the basis of the J. Rotter scale at St. Petersburg Bekhterev Psychoneurological Research Institute. It is intended to diagnose internality - externality, i.e. the degree of a person's readiness to take responsibility for events in his life, or to shift responsibility for significant situations onto other people or external circumstances (Bazhin et al., 1984). The methodology makes it possible to determine the manifestation of locus control in the following directions: general internality - externality; internality - externality in the field of achievements; internality - externality in the field of failures; internality - externality in family relationships; internality - externality in educational activities; internality - externality in interpersonal relationships; internality - externality in relation to health and illness. The questionnaire consists of 44 statements. The respondent has to fully or partially agree / disagree. To process the test results it is important to follow several steps using the key. It makes it possible to build the "LSC profile" of each respondent on seven scales. The comparison of the obtained "profile" with the norm helps to determine the degree of the revealed internality - externality. In case the deviation is more than 5.5 points, it indicates an internal type of control in specific situations. The deviation of less than 5.5 points indicates the external type of LSC.

▪ The Zimbardo Time Perspective Inventory (ZTPI) questionnaire is based on a person-oriented approach that aims to diagnose a personality relation system to a time continuum, to assess a person's relation to the surrounding reality in general, as well as to himself, his experience, and future prospects (Zimbardo et al., 1997). The Zimbardo method of the time perspective adapted to the Russian language is used (Syrtsova et al., 2007a). The author of this method, Zimbardo, suggests considering the time perspective as the main aspect in constructing the psychological time that arises from cognitive processes that divide a person's life experience into the time frames of the past, present and future, which helps to streamline a person's life and give it meaning (as cited in Zimbardo & Boyd, 1999). The questionnaire is made up of 56 items in the form of statements. For each question, the respondent has to choose the most appropriate of the five available options for level of agreement: completely incorrect; rather wrong; neutral; rather true; very true. The method consists of five scales, which include the following indicators:

Past Negative - expresses the degree of rejection of one's own past, reflects a general pessimistic, negative, aversive view of the past which suggests trauma, pain and regret. Such attitude might be formed due to actual experiences of unpleasant or traumatic events, and because of negative reconstructions of positive events, or to a mix of both.

Past Positive - reflects an attitude towards the past that is very different from the previous factor and expresses the degree of acceptance of one's past, in which any experience is perceived as a motivation to development. It also reflects a warm, sentimental attitude towards the past. This factor is characterized by a nostalgic, positive reconstruction of the past which is seen in a rainbow light.

Present Hedonistic - the present is seen as taken out from the context of the past and the future. It also reflects an unreliable, indifferent, pleasure-oriented attitude towards time and life. This factor assumes an orientation to enjoyment in the present and a lack of concern for future consequences.

Present Fatalistic - the future is seen to be independent of the individual will, initially predetermined, and the individual is subordinate to fate. It reveals a fatalistic, helpless and hopeless attitude towards the

future and life. This factor reflects the lack of a focused time perspective. It reveals the belief that the future is predetermined and it is impossible to influence it through individual actions.

Future - expresses a person's goals and plans for the future. It reflects the general orientation towards the future. It suggests that behavior is dominated by a striving for future goals and rewards. This factor is characterized by planning and achieving future goals.

Scoring is carried out in accordance with the key for each response of the respondent. Furthermore, depending on the received points, the levels on each of the scales are determined: high, increased, average, low.

6. Findings

More than half of the respondents demonstrated average indicators of their psychoemotional state in the WAM Questionnaire (58% of the total number of respondents). One third of teenage girls have high rates of differentiated self-evaluation of their functional psychoemotional state, one in ten is characterized by low self-esteem (32% and 10% of the total number of respondents, respectively). The distribution (according to the scales of the method) shows that more than half of the adolescents rated their mood high (57% of the respondents). At the same time, they assess health and activity mainly at an average level, from 65% to 71% of the total number of respondents showed such data.

Almost a quarter of teenagers (24%) gave a high assessment of well-being, and only 14% of students showed activity. Accordingly, from 11% to 15% of girls have a low level of assessment their health and activity.

According to the results of diagnostics of the level of subjective control, an approximately equal ratio of manifestations of general internality and externality was obtained (48% and 52% of the total number of respondents respectively). Adolescents showed the highest rates of the internal locus of control in the area of achievements (78% of the total number of respondents), interpersonal relationships (72%) and in relation to health and illness 60%. Thus, about two-thirds of high school students demonstrate a high level of subjective control over emotionally positive events and situations, they believe that they independently achieved good results in their life, are ready to take personal responsibility for the effectiveness of their life, building positive interpersonal relationships with peers, teachers and other people, intend to be responsible for maintaining their health, arouse respect and sympathy, and consider themselves to be able to successfully pursue their goals in the future. The remaining part of the participants of the study (22%, 28% and 40% of respondents for the considered indicators of the level of subjective control) attribute their successes, achievements and joys to external circumstances - luck, a happy fate or the help of other people considering themselves unable to actively form their social circle yet, and they consider health and illness as the result of chance and hope that recovery will come as a result of the actions of other people, especially doctors.

High indicators of externality were obtained in two areas: in the field of failures and in educational activity (67% and 68% of the total number of respondents, respectively). Consequently, two-thirds of teenage girls believe that the events occurring to them are the result of external forces - some event, other people, etc., and shift the responsibility for their failure in school onto external circumstances.

One third of high school students interpret significant events as the result of their own activities, and take responsibility for failures, including educational activities.

The manifestation of locus of control in the sphere of family relations was distributed approximately in equal shares: 46% of the respondents showed internality, 54% - externalism. Almost half of the girls feel responsible for the events happening in their families. Just over half of them consider their relatives but not themselves the cause of significant situations arising in the life of the family.

Each person tends to rely on one of the times when making decisions. Some focus on the future, others on the present or the past. When such a time orientation manifests itself invariably and for a long time, it is considered a personality trait. Zimbardo and his colleagues pay special attention to the optimal time perspective. The researchers believe that the ideal profile of the time perspective in terms of psychological and physical health, as well as the functioning of the individual in society, corresponds to the following combination of indicators of the methodology: a high score on the scale of the Past Positive, a fairly high score on the scale of the Future, an average score on the scale of the Present Hedonistic and low scores on the Past Negative and the Present Fatalistic scales. The behavior of people who act in accordance with this construct is determined by a compromise, a balance between reflections on past experience, intentions in the present and adequate ideas about the future. Analysis of statistical indicators of perception of the time perspective of pupils, shown in table 01, allows us to characterize their profile as ideal.

Table 01. Statistical indicators of perception of the time perspective of pupils

Indicators \ Scales	Past Positive	Future	Present Hedonistic	Past Negative	Present Fatalistic
Mean	3,81	3,64	3,22	2,57	2,27
Standard error of the mean	0,042	0,036	0,041	0,054	0,037
Median	3,89	3,69	3,20	2,50	2,22
Standard deviation	0,60	0,50	0,58	0,76	0,52
Minimum	1,56	1,92	1,87	1,20	0,00
Maximum	5,00	4,77	4,73	4,30	3,44

The study conducted in the boarding school for girls showed that the vast majority of respondents have high rates on the scale of Past Positive and Future. So, 39% of the respondents showed high perception of Past Positive and almost half of them showed increased indicators of perception (46%). Every fifth student is characterized both by the presence of goals and plans, and by the behavior aimed at their implementation, that is, has a high level of orientation towards the future. Two-thirds of the total number of the respondents demonstrate an increased level in this factor (67%). In this case, it's important to take into account the results of studies conducted in several countries that have tested the method. They showed that school children, in comparison with other segments of the population and age groups, are most likely to be temporarily oriented to the future, regardless of gender, status and cultural affiliation (Syrtsova et al., 2007b).

The Present Hedonistic, in which the enjoyment of the present moment is valued, without regret for the committed actions and further consequences, takes the third place in the rating of perception of the time perspective of the studied teenagers. Slightly more than half of them have increased indicators on this scale (52%), and another 40% are average.

The penultimate position in the time perspective of high school students is occupied by the Past Negative scale. Focusing on the Past Negative can be accompanied by a decrease in psychological well-being, as well as an increase in anxiety and depression. 40% were diagnosed with an average level on this scale. Another 30% of respondents were divided between low and high indicators.

When people are fatalistic about the present, they believe in fate and submit to it, believing that change is impossible. In this case, the inability to influence the events of either the present or the future is shown. None of the high school girls who took part in the study has a high level on this scale, and none of the students scored higher than the third place in the rating (8% - in the third position). The vast majority of respondents showed average and low values (53% and 39%, respectively). The data described is shown graphically in figure 01.

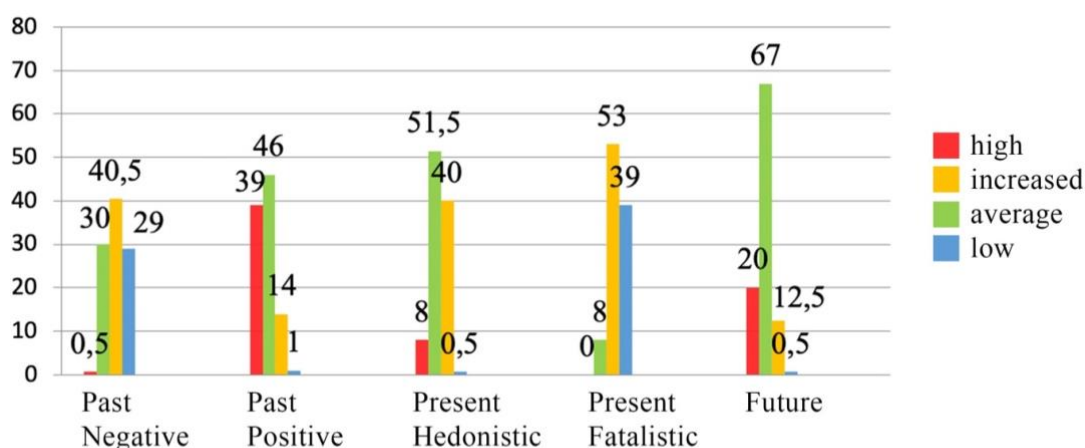


Figure 01. Results of perception of the time perspective of pupils (% of the total number of respondents)

Thus, 28% of the adolescents who took part in the study demonstrated the optimal type of perception of the time perspective, another 43% showed a type close to the optimal (when two neighboring scales change positions, for example, the Past Positive and Future, or the Past Negative and the Present Fatalistic). According to this methodology, another 13% showed the points according to which their time perspective is dominated by the Present Hedonistic, the same number of hedonism in the second place in the rating of perception of the time perspective. The remaining 3% showed suboptimal types of time perspective.

7. Conclusion

The vast majority of older adolescents showed high (one third of the respondents) and average levels (58%) of psychoemotional state. The highest result was obtained in terms of mood - 57% of respondents have a high level.

An almost equal ratio of internal and external levels of subjective control was obtained as a result of research among the participants.

More than two-thirds of students (70%) are ready to take personal responsibility for the effectiveness of their life, building positive interpersonal relationships with peers and adults, as well as for preserving their health. One-third of respondents take personal responsibility for their failures, including educational activities. According to locus of control in family relationships, the distribution of internality and externality is approximately equal.

Almost a third of the teenagers who took part in the study demonstrated the optimal type of perception of the time perspective, and another 43% showed a type close to the optimal one.

The study showed that in the conditions of an educational institution of a boarding type (relative isolation from external influences of the media and the family) with systemic psychological and pedagogical measures to create and maintain an emotionally favorable environment in the context of a massive increase in tension amid a pandemic, adolescents in such an institution maintain a positive attitude, time perspective and life activity.

Discovered differences in the emotional state of students in the ninth and tenth grades can be explained by the upcoming final tests in the ninth grades (GSE) and the residual effects of incomplete teenage crises with characteristic emotional instability.

References

- Bazhin, E. F., Golyunkina, S. A., & Etkind, A. M. (1984). Metod issledovaniya urovnya sub"ektivnogo kontrolya [Research method for the study of the level of subjective control]. *Psychological journal*, 5(3), 152-162.
- Doskin, V. A., Lavrentieva, N. A., Miroshnikov, M. P., & Sharay, V. B. (1973). Test differencirovannogo samoocenki funkcional'nogo sostoyaniya [Test of differentiated self-evaluation of functional state]. *Issues of Psychology*, 6, 141-145.
- Grigorovich, L. A., & Kachalina, E. V. (2019). Vnutrennyaya kartina zdorov'ya v strukture professional'nogo samosoznaniya specialistov antropocentricheskikh professij [Internal picture of health in the structure of professional self-consciousness of specialists in anthropocentric professions]. In L.A. Grigorovich (Ed.), *Actual directions of socio-psychological studies of personality in ontogenesis: a set of materials of the Interuniversity scientific-practical conference* (pp. 30-34). MRSU.
- Syrtsova, A., Sokolova, E. V., & Mitina, O. V. (2007a). Metodika F. Zimbardo po vremennoj perspective [The methodology of P. Zimbardo for the time perspective]. *Psychological diagnostics*, 1, 85-106.
- Syrtsova, A., Mitina, O. V., Boyd, D., Davydova, I.S., Zimbardo, P. G., Nepryaho, T. L., Nikitina, E. A., Semenova, N. S., Fjulen, N., & Yasnaya, V. A. (2007b). Fenomen vremennoj perspektivy v raznykh kul'turah (po materialam issledovaniy s pomoshch'yu metodiki ZTPI) [The phenomenon of time perspective across cultures (based on research using the ZTPI technique)]. *Cultural-historical psychology*, 3(4), 19-31. <https://doi.org/10.17759/chp.2007030403>
- Zimbardo, P. G., & Boyd, J. N. (1999). Putting time in perspective: A valid, reliable individual-difference metric. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 77(6), 1271–1288.
- Zimbardo, P. G., Keough, K. A., & Boyd, J. N. (1997). Present Time Perspective as a Predictor of Risky Driving. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 23, 1007-1023.