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**INTROSPECTION OF THE INDIVIDUAL PROJECT OF**  
**MARRIAGE**

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**Abstract**

The recent situation with registered marriages in the Russian society shows their reduction in the middle of the forms of “artificial” marriage established in our time. Against the background of marriage rate statistics, the problems of singlehood, disintegration and stability of marriage, force to study the grounds for the emergence of marriage in the private life of an individual, which are currently becoming priority issues in the sphere of family and marriage relations in psychological science. One of them is a study of factors that affect the personality’s perceptions of life in a marriage. The theoretical relevance of the problem lies in the scientific understanding of the idea of a *marriage project* of personality, the idea of self-realization in a marriage, the concept of an individual marriage project, and its implementation. In practical terms, these studies may be used to develop psychotherapeutic strategies in the practice of family counseling, an individual approach to complex situations in personal relationships, taking into account the corresponding peculiarities and nuances of building relationships. The paper describes the peculiarities of the ideas of a person about a marriage, analyzes the system of personal values, orientations, readiness for marriage at the young age among the modern generation of Russian society. Thus, in connection with the transformation of the institution of marriage and the family, as well as the values of the modern personality, it is necessary to analyze the orientation of a person, the accessibility of family value orientations.

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## 1. Introduction

The study of this problem relied on a subjective-existential approach to personality about the objectification of the subjectivity of personality and the restructuring of existence, analyzing the co-existence of the personality with significant others, about the transformative activity of a subject (Ryabikina & Tanasov, 2010), the theory of leading activity and development of the psyche (Leontiev, 1981), the theory of development about the social mediation of human mental activity and the development of higher mental functions (Vygotsky, 2005), the psychoanalytic approach, the concept of neurotic personality disorders (Horney, 2006; Horney, 2007), and, in particular, the development of works on marriage (Rogers, 2012).

Among many psychological factors (Table 01), or mental phenomena affecting the formation of marriage, namely a set of personal (subjective), external (objective), and objective-subjective causes, including their various interweavings, their mutual reinforcements or mutual relaxations and dispositions, there are those psychological determinants that may formation the education and implementation of the marriage project in the life of a personality.

**Table 1.** Internal (subjective) and external psychological factors mediating the design of marriage relations

Internal psychological factors (subjective)	External psychological factors (objective)
<p><i>mental processes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- features of cognitive processes reflecting internal information on the subject of marriage (adequate thinking, analysis of situations, ability to analyze, and introspection) as a way of thinking, ability to get rid of toxic thoughts (Chesnokova, 1982; Horney, 2007), emotional-volitional processes,</li> <li>- mental development (Vygotsky, 2005).</li> </ul> <p><i>psychological properties:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- type of temperament, properties of the nervous system, character traits, accentuation, settings and abilities, conflict).</li> <li>- value orientations, values of marriage and family values,</li> <li>- beliefs,</li> <li>- established personal meanings (Leontiev, 2003) about marriage (Rogers, 2012),</li> <li>- preferences,</li> <li>- established system of ideas of an individual about himself, the self-concept (“Self-image”) or conscious, reflexive part of the personality (Leontiev, 1981),</li> <li>- in general, the “Image of the World” of a person (Leontiev, 2003), or the internal worldview capable of distorting reality,</li> <li>- “phenomenological field”, which contains “everything that happens at any given moment inside the body and may potentially be realized” (Rogers, 2012), associations with marriage, <i>links between mental phenomena</i>,</li> <li>- focus of the individual on marriage,</li> <li>- intra-personal roles and identifications, personal identity (Erickson, 2006), values, norms, ideals,</li> <li>- peculiarities of the boundaries of the psychological space of an individual, individual need for privacy,</li> <li>- <i>isolation, personal privacy, preferences</i>, need for personal space, sovereignty (Nartova-Bochaver, 2008).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- psychology of life and stereotypes, traditions and cultural values of society,</li> <li>- influence of the legal system of society in the sphere of family and marriage,</li> <li>- provision on freedom of rights and restrictions in society,</li> <li>- social relations and roles, professional employment, one’s being (subject-spatial environment, time, space of interpersonal relations, etc. (Ryabikina, 2005),</li> <li>- how to respond to the pressure of the group (impossibility, unconscious acceptance of the line of behavior and opinion of the group), conformism (informed external consent with internal divergence from the opinion of the group), and conscious consent (acceptance and active upholding of its values, norms and ideals) (Leonidova, 2014–2020),</li> <li>- psychological pressure of society by a small or large group, hierarchy of organized systems of social environment (Ivanova, 2009), imposition of the opinion of society (<i>conformity</i> (Locke), <i>stiffness, guilt, shame, taboo</i>,</li> <li>- information from the outside world, environment, including negative (propaganda), authorities, idols, fanaticism, patriotism, co-independence (symbioses),</li> <li>- influence of the circle of communication,</li> <li>- style of family upbringing, setting of the parent family,</li> <li>- level of education,</li> <li>- logistical resources and capabilities,</li> <li>- ability to financial planning in the life path of events, including the events of marriage.</li> <li>- age periods and stages of personal development (Erickson, 2006), and limitations,</li> <li>- physical health (external to the psyche), psychosomatics, including other personality orientation (interests), manifesting itself outside and affecting psychosomatics,</li> </ul>

**mental states:**

- mental states (term by Levitova), various forms of stress, phobias and fears, depression, level of anxiety, “extreme” and crisis states (addictive behavior, aggression, hidden aggression, state of autism, internal conflicts, protective mechanisms; neurotization, psychological traumas, post-traumatic stress disorders) (Ananyev, 2006; Zhuravlev & Volovikova, 2014), impairment of consciousness; *level of personality mental activity* (Myasishchev, Rubinstein),  
- personal experience and that of others; *understanding the intrinsic nature of the pathological process* (Pevzner, 1981; Vygotsky, 2005).

- deviance of the living environment, unhealthy lifestyle (Ivanova, 2009),  
- changing sexual orientations,  
- external environment, situations, difficult living conditions, emergencies, instability, threats, cataclysms, deprivation, maladaptation (Druzhilov, 2013).

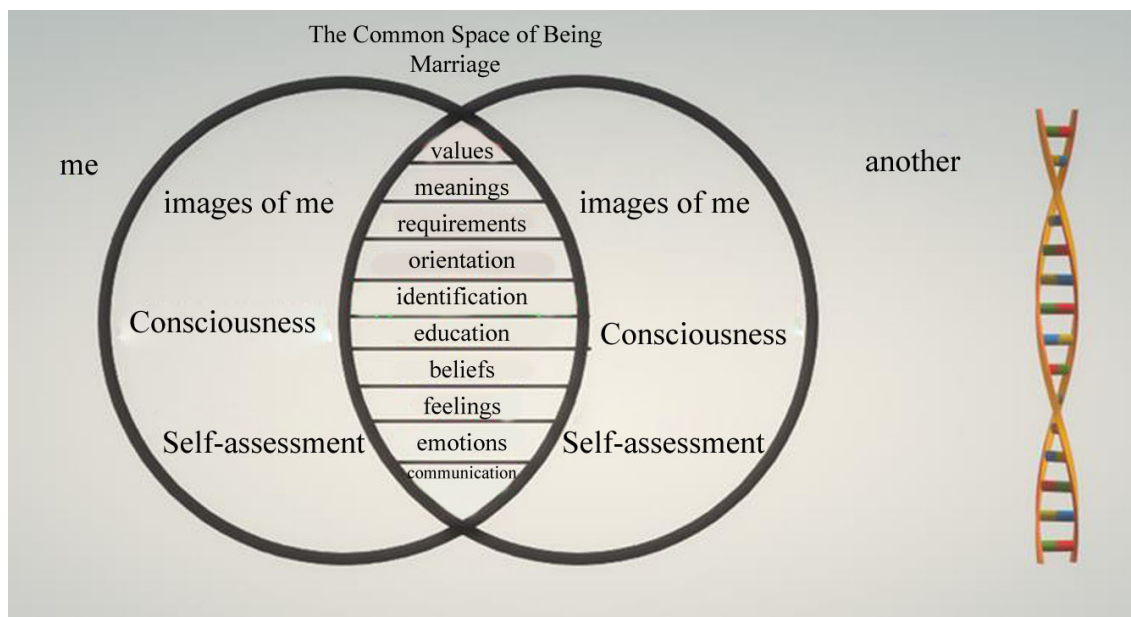
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Thus, all of the above factors may directly or indirectly influence the construction of personal marriage, are interdependent both inside internal and external factors and factors among themselves, and serve a model of personal marriage that varies from subject to subject.

The above confirms that the marriage in the life of a person depends on many criteria, in particular, the subjective factors, namely the psychological states of a person, the characteristics of internal processes of a person, personal properties and qualities; purpose of the structured relationship with a partner (expectations, claims); objective factors, including the cultural component, the age of a person, which play a role from the processes of design, implementation of the marriage project, marriage subjectivity, to the ideal compatibility with the partner. The need to combine one’s life path with another, valuably ascends from the sublime needs of an individual (Figure 01), different from the basic ones, prompts the analysis of judgments about oneself or the interpretation of judgments of other people, to explore oneself and their personal relationships through introspection.

The difference in the subjective worldviews of each individual person means not only a difference in the place of marriage, in terms of significance, but also on the basis of the features of the sensual reflection of reality (J. Gibson) and the knowledge of the specifics of the outside world. The subject himself finds new generalizations, new personal meanings and forms of real relations with the world and relations with others, and re-structures his representations in this sphere at the conceptual level. Figure 01 presents an abstract picture of the superimposition of various spheres of human existence of imaginary subjects in their common everyday space, and on the different aspects of the existence and worldview of each of them, producing mate compatibility unique to each pair. Theoretically, each overlay of subjective spaces of different subjects forms different relationships, which will be true for the same subject in relations with different partners. This means that marriages of the same personality with different partners in logic involve the joint maximization of the utility of partners with different preferences and biology (Schunemann et al., 2020), and will have different fillings.

In other words, this means the contact of different unique sets of psychological factors of subjects and the formation of their internal laws of their co-existence spaces.



**Figure 1.** Schematic representation of the superimposition of subjective spaces of marriage partners in a situation of co-existence

## 2. Problem Statement

During the conscious process of individual marriage planning in life, it projects marital relationship, self-image on its subjective level as a subject of marriage, and ideas about life in marriage. A subjective-existential approach to personality opens up prospects for a new interpretation of the phenomena of existence, in relation to which the personality acts as a subject (Ryabikina, 2005). The concept of a “subject” was studied by such authors as Rubinstein, Brushlinsky, Abulkhanova-Slavskaya and others on the basis of the reasons for the activity of a person, or the subject of the transformation of existence. In our study, the concept of a “subject” was used when considering personality as a subject of relations in marriage. A person may develop as a subject of marriage relations, but each person is at his or her level of readiness and has his or her own motives for marriage, and therefore, before seeing herself in this role, he or she may have different development strategies as a subject.

At the basis of Leontiev’s (2003) concept of meanings and values, values and “truths” in human life are not automatic, but independently working mechanisms; they affect the life of a person only through his self-determination in relation to them as a subject. Self-analysis or introspection (looking inward) serves to view, describe and analyze one’s experience and behavior and thus may lead to self-knowledge. Subjectivity (according to Fichte, Schelling and Spinoza) develops passing through the stages of feeling, contemplation, imagination, intelligence, reflection, will, understanding, intuition (Zhuravlev et al., 2009). Leontiev (2003) described the integral ideal product of the process of consciousness obtained by constantly transforming the sensual tissue of consciousness into meanings (“meaning”, objectification). Each particular personality assigns its meanings to its existence, and when we consider existence in a marriage, we understand the difference in the subjective attitude of partners to it based on the characteristics of their perception of this, in the synthesis of all scenarios, attitudes, images about it, etc. In turn, the ideas about marriage may be designed when overcoming the subject-object separation

obtaining a unique result. A personality acts as a generator and converter of meanings. It is open to the world and is able to transform it with its actions generated by new meanings.

In the formation of a marriage project, it is impossible to predict its course, suppose, with the successful implementation of the plan itself, since the traits and characteristics of partners will look for their manifestation, and therefore, the personality of each spouse will influence the nature of interpersonal processes occurring in marriage (Karney, 2015).

A person seeking coordination with a partner, convinced of the need and correctness of creating a marriage in his life, adapts to the characteristics of the partner, and is able to strategically overcome any obstacles and difficulties in the relationship. However, creatively planning future and desired marriage relations, such a motivated person should build them so effectively realizing that as far as they are desired, so simultaneously they should be feasible, according to their life “marriage project”, its acceptable option. All this pushes to the formation of the marital subjectivity of an individual, a subject of individual marriage. This is such an effective marriage, which is expressed not only by the division of common personal space, the embodiment of their images, ideas and expectations from marriage, but also by the readiness to reckon with the needs of the spouse, therefore it is designed, maturing in a specific marriage project and its implementation.

“From the point of view of a subjective approach, it is necessary to study how a person objectifies a plan, how he creates the reality of his existence, how he changes in this process of objectification, faced with resistance to the existence of others (existence is always co-existence), which embody other meanings that create personal existence in the space of the same objects and events at the same time as him” (Ryabikina, 2005).

The person, being in the parameters of his inner world and value meanings, personal prerequisites for the creation of marriage, from the moment he is ready to self-realize himself in this life space, as the coming significance, of human need in this new function (Vygotsky), designs his acceptable vision of reality and the way of communication with the opposite sex, becomes the creator of his own fate and marriage co-existence, the subject of his “marriage project”.

Thus, the person, incarnating the idea of a “marriage project”, and as a subject of marriage, on the one hand, adapts to the objective conditions of co-existence with a partner, and on the other hand, acts as the creator of his life in marriage, the fate of his family, and the quality of marriage co-existence.

### **3. Research Questions**

The question of why achieving a seemingly desirable marriage in life is an easy result for some, and for others it goes through a “thorny” path, remains difficult to realize in the psyche of an individual. As part of the psychoanalytic theory of personality, Horney (2006) first introduced the concept of “Self Image”, which studies an unconscious sense of panic, anxiety and related psychological defenses. The images of I, images of relationships with a partner in ideas about them and in their implementation in reality, not that they may not coincide, but naturally differ among themselves, according to one or another parameters, corresponding to the reality of the real image of oneself, in terms of the adequacy of the self-concept (Maralov, 2004), or, according to Rogers, are different according to the “perceived” map, “which is never reality itself”. The adequacy of self-evaluation expresses the degree to which a person’s

perceptions of himself correspond to the objective grounds of these ideas. The level of self-esteem expresses the degree of real and ideal, or desired, ideas about oneself, the level of claims, motivations and emotional characteristics of a person (Korchuganova, 2006).

The problem of not smoothly developing relationships, almost the same way may lie in the unipolarity of personal concentration on one or another past experience (Horney). According to Rogers, when marriage is used to maintain inconsistency or strengthen protective tendencies in a person, such marriage is the least satisfactory (Frager & Fadiman, 2004).

A conscious approach to its solution is discovered through introspection of the personality, for example, through the discovery of the fact of co-dependence with a partner (Horney, 2007), his personal qualities or capabilities, unlike his own, and the arrival of achieving autonomy, freeing from unnecessary pathological, inadequate or automatic thoughts that cease to be its and its need. This will push to solve its problem, and will be reflected by the help of a joint problem in the relationship of the couple. Therefore, the conclusions from the above are as follows:

1. *A person's marriage project* includes certain conditions presented and planned by it as its marriage construct, request, in maximum identity with its personal subjective images, ideas, expectations from marriage, from a particular partner, but acts as a proposal to the second partner in certain life positions. The marriage project is personal, but marriage is a free and voluntary union. Therefore, it is possible to realize such marriage relations that are feasible, really possible and distinguishable from fantasy, from hyperreality (according to Baudrillard), adequately to the ideas of a partner in a pair of effective marriage, which is expressed not only by the separation of their co-existence, the embodiment of their images, ideas and expectations from marriage, but also by taking into account the needs of the second spouse, the ability to reckon with them, therefore designed, requires readiness for a specific marriage project and its implementation.
2. The marriage project, being an external entity for an individual claiming some part of the "partner" life space, is not only the registration of an act of civil status, the emergence of a marriage relationship, and the activation of family law, but also the important implementation of the mental image of marriage of each particular person.
3. A person, who understands the need for perfect self-sufficiency and autonomy, the effectiveness of itself for itself, self-appreciating for itself, perhaps represents his *personal subjectivity*. The ability to recognize oneself, self-identify, self-base as primary in relation to being with another may be more significant for the individual, and therefore take place as his own subjectivity, or the value of himself, before making a significant value for himself – the value of a close (spouse), family and marriage, in an adequate and conscious way. Introspection may be seen as an instrument of arbitrary understanding of oneself and relationships in the formation of a successful marriage by the subject. Introspection as a term and variety of various types of analysis of the human psyche accommodates and reveals itself in many psychological processes. Thus, introspection, in principle, may be key to a self-determined person in interpersonal relations.

#### **4. Purpose of the Study**

The purpose and objectives of the study are to diagnose and distinguish the main psychological factors among many (Table 01), and those psychological determinants on which the formation and implementation of the marriage project of each individual depends.

As an object of study, the personality acts as a subject of introspection. It means the study of ideas of the personality of marriage and formation of the project of the marriage relations in the activity which is looking for solutions in the direction of the ideas of marriage, or formation of the project of the marriage relations (marriage project) to realize them (to self-fulfill in marriage), to be identified with itself as a “spouse”; and with a partner, feeling him as “yours” as his spouse, according to some personality criteria (subjective-existential approach to personality). What was in the relationship of people becomes a mental function (Vygotsky). Further, the relationship has a chance to develop successfully, in the form of a qualitative marriage. Introspection, internal thinking activities, as well as specific external actions, implementation of the strategy, are supposed to occur in response to the demand for efforts to meet the need. That is, the activity triggered by needs is connected to the mental function, and which determines consciousness (according to Leontyev). “The internal (subject) acts through the external and thereby alters itself” (Leontiev, 1981; Leontiev, 1975; Zhuravlev et al., 2009). In this case, when there is a need for marriage, then it uses a mental function by connecting “marriage creation activities”.

#### **5. Research Methods**

The calculations by Spearman’s rank correlation gave the results of significant associations ( $r_s$ ) between indicators of value beliefs according to the following applied methods: value orientations (Rokeach, 2009) (marriage and family), role expectations and aspirations in marriage (REA) (Volkova, 2004) (identification with a partner), self-esteem studies by Budassi (Korchuganova, 2006) and self-actualization test (SAT) (Shostrom, 2009) (value orientations).

#### **6. Findings**

The selected factors based on the methodology scales were found to be significant correlations reflecting both internal psychological factors and personally important needs using a sample of 50 participants (students) of women aged 19–26 years in the socio-humanitarian sphere. The results showed the inherent importance of updating the need for communication and activity in the social environment. All found correlations act as indicators of the projection of the mental health of an individual in the presented co-existence with another, and the health of life for the individual is an access to human communication. It may be assumed that in the same perspective, young people imagine both the role of the spouse and their lifestyle in marriage. Everything described above should explain the orientation of a person entirely in the circle of communication of his peers, in view of the young age and therefore distant, or completely absent ideas about marriage as a matter of urgency. The general conclusion is that self-esteem of the personality is more adequately formed, the more the personality finds its self-affirmation in the external world, introspects itself according to its values. The greatest idea of

family and marriage was reflected by the correlation in connection with “happy family life” and “parental and educational” function (–0.463), as not supposed to be one without the other. All quantitative results are shown in Table 02.

**Table 2.** Correlation between factors-values (overall indicator by group) indicating the attitude of an individual to marriage

Scales	Rs
“Development” (Rokeach, 2009) – “social activity” (REA)	-0.307
“Active life” (Rokeach, 2009) – “emotional-psychotherapeutic” (REA)	0.313
Self-assessment level (Budassi, 2012) – “self-actualization in value orientation” (SAT)	0.330
Self-esteem level (Budassi, 2012) – “presence of good and faithful friends” (Rokeach, 2009)	-0.325
“Health” (Rokeach, 2009) – “social activity” (REA)	0.271
“Health” (Rokeach, 2009) – “personal identification with the spouse” (REA)	0.277
“Love” (Rokeach, 2009) – “social activity” (ROP)	0.308
“Happy family life” (Rokeach, 2009) – “social activity” (REA)	0.308
“Happy family life” (Rokeach, 2009) – “self-actualization in self-acceptance” (SAT)	-0.279
“Good friends” (Rokeach, 2009) – “emotional-psychotherapeutic” (REA)	-0.280
“Freedom” (Rokeach, 2009) – “social activity” (REA)	-0.339
“Happy family life” (Rokeach, 2009) – “parental and educational” (REA)	-0.463

Based on the obtained results from a sample of young women it may be said that they are mainly dominated by the values that they need for the current age period (Table 02). When in the life project of a person there will be readiness for other values, ultimately derived from itself as an author who knows the world, and being the “self-product” of external and internal world, and the emergence of the need to create co-existence with another, – this will allow accommodating the other in their existence as a spouse, as an important value in their implicit system of values, to the pre-existing value of oneself, the value of communication even without the co-existence.

## 7. Conclusion

In conclusion, let us summarize the results of a theoretical review of scientific views on family and marriage relations, and qualitative interpretations, the focus of which was the idea of a “marriage project”:

Marriage is a form of personal realization and an area of employment in which, through the creative efforts of partners, effective relationships and the quality of personal marriage are created, the private case of specific subjects of marriage. Inadequate personal meanings (sign, or conceptual perception), associations, beliefs and ideas about marriage built into the subject’s psyche may contradict existing family values and orientations rejecting the development of the marriage scenario, and vice versa, based on the subjective ambiguous attitude of everyone in their life path to the development of marriage relations. Thus, the main acquired self-actualizations of a person as a subject of introspection for the implementation of his marriage project are as follows: awareness of the functions of the family and marriage as their own; introspection of personal identity, identity with marital role; personal and marital subjectivity; value orientations and the life meaning of marriage.



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