

SOCIAL PHILOSOPHY, PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE LEVEL OF PSYCHOLOGICAL
WELL-BEING AMONG RF AND RA STUDENTS

Abstract

The rapid changes, crises, pandemics, and wars in the modern world introduce new requirements to a person and his/her adaptive resources. All these above-mentioned external factors in the form of separate stressors, and sometimes all together combined, have a complex effect on a person's psychological well-being. Taking into consideration the need to clarify the impact of various factors on PWB (psychological well-being), the authors of the article set a goal to study the PWB characteristics among the Republic of Armenia (from now on, RA) and Russian Federation (hereinafter – RF) students. The research hypothesis was that RA and RF students might have different levels of PWB expression. The correlation analysis has shown that the indicators of PWB of different ethnocultural groups acting in different social contexts have certain peculiarities of expression and are quantitatively comparable.

Keywords: pandemic, war, psychological well-being, students.

Introduction

The rapid changes, crises, pandemics, and wars in the modern world introduce new requirements to a person and his/her adaptive resources. All these above-mentioned external factors in the form of separate stressors, and sometimes all together combined, have a complex effect on a person's psychological well-being (hereinafter, PWB). The effects of various external factors on PWB have been studied by different authors. These studies have increased enormously, especially since 2019 when the pandemic broke out and spread. Particularly, the effects of the pandemic have been studied on PWB (Epishin, Salikhova, Bogacheva, Bogdanova, & Kiseleva, 2020). WB has been observed in the context of the development of negative emotions and distress (Park et al., 2021), in the context of isolation and lockdown (O'Connor et al., 2021), in the context of distance learning, organized at universities (Lukács, 2021) etc.

Due to the global pandemic, educational institutions worldwide, including Armenia, had to shift into distance learning, introducing new terms and conditions for students and faculty members' professional activities. In such situations, a person had to adapt to some new conditions at once, including social isolation, distance learning, reduced social contact, and fear of being infected. In the case of Armenia and the above-mentioned factors, furthermore, the 44-day war in 2021, its defeat, and the subsequent political instability were added. Obviously, under the long-term effects of such stressors, students' PWB is endangered.

Background: The main mission of science is the improvement of the quality of human life, his/her well-being in the healthcare, social, political, economic, educational and security spheres as well in the other major fields that are important for the society. It is clear that the human factor is at the centre of all these spheres, and very often, a person's PWB, personal and

professional characteristics and qualities can play an important role and contribute to the development, rise or decline of this or that field or sector. Therefore, among the factors determining the socio-economic well-being of the country, it is important and necessary to consider and observe a student's – a future specialist's PWB. Taking into consideration the need to clarify the impact of various factors on PWB, within the framework of this survey, the goal was to study the PWB characteristics among the Republic of Armenia (from now on, RA) and Russian Federation (hereafter, RF) students. The *hypothesis* is that RA and RF students may have different levels of PWB expression.

The present study on students' PWB is based on a contextual approach. In social psychology, context is considered a set of factors that influence a human's behaviour in a particular situation (G. Andreeva, D. Bivin, D. Dzhekson, E. Langer, A. Maslow, V. Frankl and others). According to contextualism (R. M. Lerner, D. Matsumoto, J. Caprara and D. Servon, D. Ford and others), the psyche is conditioned by a socio-cultural context.

PWB is often considered a component of subjective well-being or of subjective happiness, and sometimes it is identified with them, and sometimes it is considered a separate phenomenon. According to E. Diener, subjective well-being (hereinafter – SWB) is the personal perception and experience of positive and negative emotional responses and global and specific cognitive evaluations of satisfaction with life. It has been defined as “a person's cognitive and affective evaluations of his or her life” (Diener, Oishi, & Lucas, 2003, p. 63).

The PWB description was introduced by N. Bradburn (1969) as a balance between positive and negative effects, which, according to the author, is a state of happiness. K. Ryff described a theoretical model of PWB that encompasses six distinct dimensions of wellness (Autonomy, Environmental Mastery, Personal Growth, Positive Relations with Others, Purpose in Life, Self-

Acceptance) (Ryff & Keyes, 1995).

Methods: The following methods have been applied in our work to study students' PWB – K. Ryff's “Psychological Well-Being Scale” (*adapted by T. D. Shevelenkova and P. P. Fesenko*), which consists of six scales (Shevelenkova & Phesenko, 2005). The questionnaire identifies such features as Autonomy, Environmental Mastery, Personal Growth, Positive Relations with Others, Purpose in Life, Self-Acceptance.

The next is E. Diener's Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) method, which consists of five points. The SWLS has been used intensively as a measure of the life satisfaction component of SWB. The questions are assessed according to a seven-point Likert scale.

The third method is D. Leontiev's Life-Purpose Orientation Test (hereafter LPOT), which has five sub-scales: Goals, Process, Result, Internal Locus of Control, and External Locus of Control.

The above-mentioned methods have been selected, taking into account the aim and hypothesis of the topic of the study. The methods have gone through all the phases of adaptation and contextualization; they are valid and reliable and correspond to the socio-cultural peculiarities.

Sample: 486 students participated in the study (n=486, out of which 186 were from Armenia, and 300 were from Russia): The sample consists of students living in different regions of Russia and Armenia and studying in different universities, whose age varies from 17 to 28. The average age of participants is 22,5. The participants were randomly selected, taking into account their country of residence and the type of their leading activity – learning. Each participant took part in the study once. In order to maintain the accuracy of the data, any incomplete or incomprehensible completed questionnaires were not taken into account (14 answers). The following criteria were included during the student data collection: the presence of romantic relationship, job, financial independence, owning a house/ apartment, and health condition.

Results and Discussion: The data were analyzed by the SPSS math. Statistical software package. The analysis revealed several simi-

rities and differences, and correlations between the samples of the two countries, i.e. between the RA and RF students.

Table 1.

Life-Purpose Orientation Data (based on RA and RF sample)

<i>Basic Scales</i>	<i>The Average of the Russian Sample Range (M)</i>	<i>The Average of the Armenian Sample Range (M)</i>	<i>Maximum Possible Score</i>
<i>Goals</i>	29	27	42
<i>Process</i>	27,5	25.5	42
<i>Result</i>	23	19.5	35
<i>Internal locus of control</i>	20	15	28
<i>External locus of control</i>	29.5	19.5	42

As can be seen from Table 1, the results of the Armenian and Russian samples are different: The Armenian sample shows low rates in the Result scale, the Internal Locus of Control scale and External Locus of Control scale. It can be assumed that PWB level depends on cultural, social and psychological contexts.

The contextual approach enables us to consider distance learning and the post-war situation in Armenia as significant factors in the formation

of students' PWB. From the contextual approach perspective, the Armenian sample's low scores in the Internal Locus of Control and External Locus of Control scales compared to the Russian sample may indicate both the socio-cultural and the post-war contexts. As a result of these factors, it reveals the lack of belief in organizing and managing one's own life according to their goals and perceptions.

Table 2.

PWB Scale (based on RA and RF sample)

<i>Basic Scales</i>	<i>The average of the Russian sample range (M)</i>	<i>The average of the Armenian sample range (M)</i>	<i>Maximum possible score</i>
Positive Relations with Others	53.1	27.6	84
Autonomy	49.2	24.7	84
Environmental Mastery	47.9	27.3	84
Personal Growth	54.2	29.9	84
Purpose in Life	51.8	27.5	84
Self-Acceptance	48.9	21.2	84
PWB	305	158.2	504

Table 2 reveals a significant difference between the RA and RF students' PWB data. The Armenian sample reveals an overall low PWB level, whereas, in the case of the Russian sample, the PWB is at the intermediate level. It is worth noting that the RA students have a below-

average level for all the scales.

The pandemic and distance learning as stressors equally hit and affected students living and studying in Armenia and Russia. E Suh, E. Diener and F. Fujita (1996) found that in less than three months, the effects of many major life

events (e.g., being fired) lost *their* impact on Well-Being.

The study among students was conducted in March 2021, which means that distance learning (online education) had already been in progress for a year and the pandemic already existed for more than a year, and the war was the major negative factor that continued to affect the RA students and which was absent in case of the RF students. Besides, the low level can also be explained by the ongoing crisis for the Armenians and the continuing traumatization of the society.

The correlation analysis has shown that the indicators of PWB of different ethnocultural groups acting in different social contexts have certain peculiarities of expression and mathematical connections. Thus, the Russian sample data analysis revealed a significant connection between Life satisfaction and Environmental Mastery indicators ($r=0.53$; $p=0.04$). In the case of the Armenian sample, no such connection was found. However, in the case of the Armenian sample, there was a connection between Life Satisfaction and the Presence of Goal ($r=0.14$; $p=0.05$) and subjective happiness ($r=0.42$; $p=0.01$).

In the case of the Russian sample, subjective happiness is connected with Self-Acceptance ($r=0.6$; $p=0.02$); no such mathematical connection was found in the case of the Armenian sample. Whereas in the case of the Armenian sample, subjective happiness has a positive connection with the Positive Relations with Others ($r=0.27$; $p=0.01$).

Conclusion

The central research hypothesis which has proposed that PWB may have different levels (and levels of expression) among students, who live in similar conditions (such as the pandemic and distance learning) but at the same time live in different social contexts, and that PWB components may have significant connections to dif-

ferent indicators is confirmed by empirical evidence (proven true).

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