

SOCIO-PSYCHOLOGICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING AMONG STUDENTS

NAIRA HAKOBYAN

National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia
International Scientific Educational Centre
Doctor of Psychology, Professor
naira.hakobyan@isec.am

IRYNA SOTNYK

Doctor of Sciences in Economics, Professor,
Sumy State University, Ukraine
sotnyk@econ.sumdu.edu.ua

ANNA KHACHATRYAN

National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia
International Scientific Educational Centre
PhD in Psychology, Associate Professor
anna.khachatryan@isec.am

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Abstract

The problem of a person's subjective well-being is one of the fundamental issues studied by various sciences, such as philosophy, economics, medicine, and psychology. Each science complements this concept with its own content. Medicine connects subjective well-being with other components of the quality of life, such as mental health. Currently, this problem is actively studied by psychologists. This is due to the need to understand the mechanisms underlying subjective well-being: how these mechanisms regulate a person's behaviour and how they affect their relationships with other people. The problem of subjective well-being is associated with the problem of positive development of personal growth. Scientists show considerable interest in this problem, taking into account the trends in the development of modern society. Subjective well-being is understood as a state of mental health, coherence of mental processes and internal harmony, which depends on whether a person has clear goals, as well as the resources and conditions for achieving them. Subjective well-being of students is one of the current problems of psychological science, which acquires special significance in the modern educational and socio-cultural environment. It is considered a multi-component phenomenon, the basis of which is a person's

subjective experiences, internal adaptability, and the ability to function effectively in the social environment.

Keywords: Subjective well-being, self-realisation, self-esteem, development, emotional stability.

ՈՒՍԱՆՈՂՆԵՐԻ ՇՐՋԱՆՈՒՄ ՍՈՒԲՅԵԿՏԻՎ ԲԱՐԵԿԵՑՈՒԹՅԱՆ ՍՈՑԻԱԼ-ՀՈԳԵԲԱՆԱԿԱՆ ԲՆՈՒԹԱԳԻՐԸ

ՆԱԻՐԱ ՀԱԿՈԲՅԱՆ

ՀՀ ԳԱԱ գիտակրթական միջազգային կենտրոն,
հոգեբանական գիտությունների դոկտոր, պրոֆսոր,
naira.hakobyan@isec.am

ԻՐԻՆԱ ՍՈՏՆԻԿ

Սամիի պետական համալսարան, Ուկրաինա,
տնտեսագիտության դոկտոր, պրոֆեսոր,
sotnyk@econ.sumdu.edu.ua

ԱՆՆԱ ԽԱՉԱՏՐՅԱՆ

ՀՀ ԳԱԱ գիտակրթական միջազգային կենտրոն,
հոգեբանական գիտությունների թեկնածու, դոցենտ
anna.khachatryan@isec.am

Համառոտագիր

Անձի սուբյեկտիվ բարեկեցության խնդիրը հիմնարար խնդիրներից է, որն ուսումնասիրվում է տարբեր գիտությունների կողմից, ինչպիսիք են փիլիսոփայությունը, տնտեսագիտությունը, բժշկությունը և հոգեբանությունը: Յուրաքանչյուր գիտություն լրացնում է այս հասկացությունը հատուկ բովանդակությամբ: Բժշկությունը սուբյեկտիվ բարեկեցությունը կապում է կյանքի որակի, հոգեկան առողջության այլ բաղադրիչների հետ: Ներկայումս այս խնդիրն ակտիվորեն ուսումնասիրվում է հոգեբանների կողմից: Դա պայմանավորված է սուբյեկտիվ բարեկեցության հիմքում ընկած մեխանիզմները հասկանալու անհրաժեշտությամբ. թե ինչպես են այդ մեխանիզմները կարգավորում մարդու վարքագիծը և ինչպես են ազդում նրա՝ այլ մարդկանց հետ հարաբերությունների վրա: Սուբյեկտիվ բարեկեցության խնդիրը կապված է անձնային աճի պոզիտիվ զարգացման խնդրի հետ: Գիտնականները զգալի հետաքրքրություն են ցուցաբերում այս խնդրի նկատմամբ՝ հաշվի առնելով ժամանակակից հասարակության զարգացման միտումները: Սուբյեկտիվ բարեկեցությունը հասկացվում է

որպես հոգեկան առողջության, հոգեկան գործընթացների համահունչության և ներքին ներդաշնակության հոգեվիճակ, որը կախված է նրանից, թե արդյոք անձն ունի հստակ նպատակներ, դրանց հասնելու ռեսուրսներ և պայմաններ: Ուսանողների սուբյեկտիվ բարեկեցությունը հոգեբանական գիտության արդիական խնդիրներից մեկն է, որը հատուկ նշանակություն է ստանում ժամանակակից կրթական և սոցիալ-մշակութային միջավայրում: Այն համարվում է որպես բազմաբաղադրիչ երևույթ, որի հիմքում ընկած են անձի սուբյեկտիվ փորձառությունները, ներքին հարմարվողականությունը և սոցիալական միջավայրում արդյունավետ գործելու ունակությունը:

Բանալի բառեր՝ սուբյեկտիվ բարեկեցություն, ինքնաձանաչում, ինքնագնահատական, զարգացում, հուզական կայունություն:

Introduction

Student age is considered one of the most complex and dynamic stages of an individual's psychological development. During this period, identity, value system, worldview and attitude towards the future are formed. Subjective well-being, which expresses the subjective satisfaction of the individual, mental stability and positive emotional background, acquires fundamental importance in the lives of students. It directly affects the personal growth of the student, academic progress and social relations. Therefore, it is relevant to study how subjective well-being manifests itself and develops during student age, taking into account the psychological characteristics of students in different courses. Young people are especially sensitive to changes in socio-psychological characteristics. The youth period is an important stage, where, on the one hand, the structure of well-being continues to form and become more complex, and on the other hand, it has already achieved certain qualitative and structural changes in development, thanks to all previous stages. Here, we already have the opportunity to study the manifestations of subjective well-being and, based on this, interpret other psychological characteristics of a person, as well as predict possible patterns in the dynamics of subjective well-being.

Theoretical and Methodological Bases

The features of the formation of individual well-being are interconnected with the process of searching for identity in youth. This period (defined by the age limits of 16–25 years old) becomes special in ontogenesis, since its content is the formation of a person as a subject of his own development. Alexandrova (2017) notes that the features of psychological well-being depend on the age stage. It is determined by new psychological formations that correspond to age and the leading activities characteristic of a given age, the specific social development of each age, individual psychological characteristics, emotional state, and psychological defence mechanisms. Subjective well-being in adolescence, according to Konty (2005), should be determined by the level of formation of basic new-age formations, orientation in one's own personality traits, and the ability to make life plans. Many researchers of the youth period agree with the postulate about the key role of the

development of relationships during this period (Hakobyan et al., 2024; Walters, 2016; Watts, 2015). The peculiarity of the transition from adolescence to youth is largely determined by the fact that during this period of life, not only a person's attitude towards the world around him, other people as part of it, but also his attitude towards himself is sharply manifested. A whole series of different age priorities is built around this. Among them are: personal and professional self-determination, achievement of general social, intellectual and emotional maturity, release from the parental home, identification of the "I", affirmation of self-determination, concept of life, and establishment of meaningful relationships with other people (Sibi, 2020).

Biologically, student age is often defined as the period from 17 to 25 years. This is the period when people complete their physical maturation, but are still in an active phase of psychological and social development. However, socially, student age can span a wider range, since people today often begin or continue their studies later in life.

The student period is an important stage of socio-psychological development, which includes a number of features:

1. Formation of personal identity
 - The student period is a stage of searching for and forming an identity.
 - Many students are trying to understand their calling, interests and life goals.
 - The skills of making independent decisions usually develop during this period.
2. Formation of social roles
 - Students are moving from a transitional stage – from “school” to “adult”.
 - New social roles are added to their lives – student, friend, sometimes employee or member of a newly created family.
3. Striving for independence
 - Gaining independence is important during this period.
 - Many students begin to move away from parental control, take greater responsibility for their education, finances and future.
4. Expansion of social ties
 - The student period is a period of active socialisation.
 - During this period, a variety of relationships are formed – with friends, professors, colleagues.
 - Often, the circle of friends becomes more important than the family.
5. Searching for emotional stability
 - Students may experience emotional instability, stress, and a sense of uncertainty.
 - Emotional skills and coping mechanisms are usually formed during this period.
6. Rethinking values and worldview
 - This period is often accompanied by a reassessment of previous values and

the formation of a new worldview.

- Students begin to form their own opinions on society, politics, culture, and other issues.
7. Planning for a career and the future
- Many students begin to think about their professional lives.
 - This period emphasises self-development, the acquisition of professional knowledge and skills.
8. Personal crises
- Crises related to identity, relationships, and the future may arise during this period.
 - Causes often include a mismatch between expectations and reality, stress caused by exams or failures.
9. Intellectual development activity
- Student years are marked by high activity of intellectual abilities: development of thinking, analysis, and creativity.
 - Interest in scientific research and innovative thinking is often formed.

These features are largely determined by both biological and social factors that affect the psychological and social development of the student.

A person's life path consists of certain stages, the harmonious passage of which contributes to the achievement of personal maturity. One of the life events of a young person is separation from the parental family, which, on the one hand, provides rich resources for personal growth and development, and, on the other hand, can be a difficult life situation that temporarily reduces the level of a person's psychological well-being. To strengthen one's potential, it is especially important to feel well-being. Along with the disappearance of a sense of inner satisfaction, there is tension, the emergence of inconsistencies in actions, a decrease in creativity, and a decrease in the effectiveness of acting in non-standard life situations. There is a depletion of compensatory capabilities and a decrease in the body's resources, which leads to the emergence of certain psychosomatic disorders. According to the opinions of a number of authors, separation from the mother is an inevitable condition for the well-being of an individual. Without timely separation from the family, a person's critical thinking cannot be formed, and creative freedom cannot be fully manifested (Smith, 2014; Sallehuddin, 2021; Keniston, 1960). A significant role in the methodological formulation of the topic was played by M. Bowen's systemic family therapy (Kerr & Bowen, 1988), which raised questions about the differentiation of family members. At the end of the 20th century, a number of empirical studies appeared on the relationships between separation from the family, adaptation to the college environment, and marital satisfaction, among others. Separation from these social environments is recognised as a significant phenomenon for the individual, built on the transformation of the attachment formed in childhood in relationships with parents. In turn, Frankl (1992) notes that the way to gain personal sovereignty is the timely separation of the child from his parents. It is often accepted that a

change of residence is not a sufficient condition for gaining independence, since the external (territorial, financial) aspect does not necessarily determine the internal, psychological one. Physical separation is a complex life situation that can be a potential source of stress, although it is normative. It is the spatial “separation” of parents and children that often triggers adaptation mechanisms, stimulating active adaptation to existing conditions, requirements, and problems, not excluding, and even facilitating, the discovery of new resources both in the environment and in the person himself. In any complex life situation, the established balance, the accepted routine of life, is violated. This causes negative emotions and affects the assessment of the well-being of the individual (Anheier, 2015). One of the main tasks of the modern education system is to create conditions for students’ positive development in a dynamic, unpredictable world. The phenomenon of students’ non-adaptation is widespread, associated with the transition to a new stage of their lives – the beginning of their studies in higher educational institutions. The complexity of information flows and the associated system of interpersonal relationships, as well as the abrupt change in work and leisure schedules, cause prolonged emotional stress and anxiety.

The problem of subjective well-being of students includes two main components:

- cognitive – goals, meanings, achieved results;
- emotional – experiences related to the implementation of the set goals, as well as one’s own behaviour (Diener, 1984).

Today, the main task of the educational system is to create the necessary conditions for students to acquire skills and abilities that contribute to their positive development in a dynamic, unpredictable, information-rich, contradictory modern world. The educational system is currently undergoing active restructuring, and many universities are developing new teaching models. This is due to the fact that curricula are changing, new courses, pedagogical technologies and educational programs are being introduced.

Student age is a period of psychological development during which a person’s self-awareness is formed, self-esteem is established, social relationships deepen, and a professional identity begins to take shape. At this stage, subjective well-being becomes the result of the interaction of both the person’s internal resources and external social factors. A student, as a special stage of development, needs emotional stability to maintain mental health and stabilise self-esteem. If a student does not have emotional balance, then psychological tension, depression, or evasive behaviour may arise under the influence of stress factors. The role of the socio-psychological environment in the formation of students’ subjective well-being is emphasised. Subjective well-being is influenced by the quality of interpersonal relationships, a person’s degree of self-realisation of a person, and the presence of social support systems (Hakobyan & Khachatryan, 2022).

Subjective well-being can be perceived as a psychological manifestation of

an individual's quality of life, which is determined both by the harmony of his emotions and thoughts and by the dynamics of social connections, self-knowledge, and personal growth. It includes favourable self-esteem, a sense of meaning in life, and effective emotional regulation and stress resistance. In modern approaches, subjective well-being is clearly linked to the availability of internal resources, the stability of self-esteem, and psychological coping mechanisms. In this context, student age, as a transitional stage from adolescence to adulthood, is highly sensitive to emotional pressures, the search for identity, fluctuations in self-esteem, and the development of social self-awareness.

Subjective well-being of students is of key importance in terms of their overall development, educational progress and social relationships. It includes elements of both psychological and social and physical well-being. An individual's happiness is directly conditioned by the satisfaction of his or her basic needs: if a person cannot feel happy without satisfying basic needs, then, in the opposite situation, even the satisfaction of some needs cannot lead to full satisfaction if the person does not have the opportunity for self-realisation.

The feeling of happiness plays a vital role both for the individual, for social groups, and for society as a whole. It reflects the value system of society, social stereotypes and the degree of human involvement in social processes. The historical analysis of social understandings of happiness shows the transition from ancient, vague concepts to more individualised, social and cultural concepts (Jarden & Roache, 2023).

In sociological literature, various approaches to happiness have been formed at different times. In the 20th century, an attempt was made to consider it from a scientific point of view. In this context, three stages are distinguished: initially, attention was paid to the role of happiness in social mechanisms, then a decrease in interest was observed in its explanatory value, and recently, its study has been reactivated in the context of the assessment of personality, emotions, culture and everyday life.

Modern theoretical approaches distinguish between objective and subjective approaches: the first focuses on objective indicators demonstrating well-being, and the second considers happiness as a subjective feeling and experience. Accordingly, happiness can be defined as a dominant direction of individual and group consciousness, associated with social values and norms, expressed in a high degree of satisfaction, and accompanied by positive emotional experiences (Stone A., Mackie, 2013).

In modern approaches, subjective well-being is clearly associated with the availability of internal resources, the stability of self-esteem and psychological coping mechanisms. In this context, student age, as a transitional stage from adolescence to adulthood, is highly sensitive to emotional pressures, identity search, fluctuations in self-esteem, and developments in social self-awareness. The study of students' subjective well-being is also important in that it affects academic motivation,

academic progress, social integration, and personal development (Zhou & Chen, 2019; Jarden & Roache, 2023).

Subjective well-being is based on the formation of self-awareness, which includes both cognitive and affective components. An individual who has a stable and positive self-esteem, a clear understanding of the “I”, and developed self-regulation skills is more likely to maintain emotional balance even in difficult situations.

Self-esteem is not only a component of subjective well-being, but also one of its predictive factors. Students with high self-esteem are more likely to trust their own abilities, show initiative, avoid passivity, and overcome failures. In contrast, low self-esteem is associated with emotional vulnerability, social isolation, depressed mood, and a higher risk of self-harming behaviours.

It is noteworthy that during the student age, self-esteem is often formed based on social comparisons. That is, an individual evaluates himself by comparing himself with others, which, in turn, can contribute to both positive emotional experiences and depression, underestimation and ineffective emotional reactions.

Youth (including student age) is a crucial stage in the formation of identity. During this period, the answer to the question “who am I” is formed, based on experience, current role perception and future goals. The successful course of this process contributes to emotional stability, and failure leads to emotional confusion and identity dissonance. Students with a high level of subjective well-being usually have well-developed emotional self-regulation. They can control negative emotions, respond constructively to stress and maintain social ties. This skill develops from childhood and is influenced by family models, the support of the educational environment, and a person’s level of internal maturity. Students’ subjective well-being is not only an indicator of mental health, but also an important factor in educational and social effectiveness. It is determined by the structural elements of self-awareness, including self-concept, self-esteem, and emotional self-regulation. All of these together ensure the student’s personal stability and subjective sense of happiness (Stone & Mackie, 2013).

Methodology and Methods

The methodological basis of the research was formed by both interdisciplinary and intra-disciplinary qualitative research methods: the comparative method, the historical method, the sociological method, and the psychological observation method.

Results

Subjective well-being develops in the process of socialisation, which implies successful adaptation to society. Then a subjectively well-being person successfully solves the problems of his age development and constructively resolves age-related conflicts. At a student’s age, subjective well-being is a phenomenon of subjective perception, which is conditioned by the evaluative function of the psyche. First of all, we mean such evaluative phenomena as “subjective attitude”,

“self-concept”, “self-esteem”, “self-control attitude”, “causal self-attribution”, as well as the formations of assessment of an integral stable consciousness of identity. Self-esteem is considered in the psychological literature from several aspects. More often, researchers consider self-esteem as a component of the concept of self-determination (affective, emotional, evaluative and even emotional-value component). There is no consensus in psychological science on the relationship between self-awareness and self-determination. Thus, in particular, a number of authors argue that self-esteem is an emotional form of manifestation of self-awareness. In contrast to the above, the works of other researchers prove that self-esteem acts as a substructure of the personality, which is expressed through self-awareness. It can act as an indicator of a person’s self-realisation. Self-esteem is an expression of the generalised meaning of the “I”, which is manifested in the degree of self-confidence. Thus, the emergence of self-confidence occurs in the conflict of the “I” with subjective motives, which are objectified by the needs of the individual in his self-realisation. Self-esteem, in essence, is a self-oriented evaluative formation of the individual, created in the process of dialogue within the “I-I” system, and manifested as a relatively stable self-esteem and a certain level of self-esteem. Meanwhile, the basis for the formation of self-esteem lies in the field of social norms, standards, and comparisons with other people. Self-esteem in this case is understood as an autonomous element of self-consciousness, the main function of which is to present its content to self-consciousness in the form of an “assessment result.” The relationship between subjective well-being and self-esteem has been widely studied in psychological science. Subjective well-being is formed in the process of socialisation, the successful course of which contributes to the harmonious development of the individual and the stable formation of his self-esteem. In psychological literature, self-esteem is considered a component of a person’s self-determination, reflecting a person’s attitude towards themselves and shaping their social behaviour. At a student’s age, self-esteem has a significant impact on the social, academic, and emotional stability of a student. It contributes to the self-realisation of the individual, helps to overcome life difficulties, and builds effective interpersonal relationships.

Conclusion

Studies of the relationship between self-esteem and subjective well-being among students show that self-esteem is one of the main indicators not only of an individual’s subjective well-being, but also of their social and personal stability. In this context, the role of social comparison is particularly important: when an individual evaluates his achievements in comparison with others, this can affect his self-esteem, both positively and negatively. As a result, it can be concluded that subjective well-being and self-esteem are interconnected and are conditioned by social, psychological and cultural factors. Their study is important from the point of view of maintaining and improving the psychological well-being of students,

which can contribute to the full development of the individual and effective social integration.

Subjective well-being of students is closely related to age and personal characteristics. The most stable emotional state is observed among students who have passed certain stages of self-esteem development and social adaptation. Interpersonal communication skills, the presence of social support, and the psychological safety of the environment have a significant impact on the subjective well-being of students. The absence of these factors leads to intrapersonal tension, a decrease in self-esteem and a decrease in learning motivation. A high level of subjective well-being is often combined with high indicators of learning effectiveness. Students who have well-developed communication skills and positive self-esteem easily overcome emotional obstacles and stressful situations.

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