PRRAEPGDA 2020

Personal and Regulatory Resources in Achieving Educational and Professional Goals in the Digital Age

SELF-REGULATION RESOURCES AND JOB SATISFACTION IN PROFESSIONALS UNDER WORK STRESS

Titova Maria Aleksandrovna (a)*
*Corresponding author

(a) Lomonosov Moscow State University, Moscow, Russia, mariatitova@mail.ru

Abstract

Job satisfaction is often connected with work efficiency and psychological well-being of professionals. This article provides an overview of the cycle of studies on correlations between the psychological resources of functional state self-regulation and job satisfaction among professionals working under stress. The cycle of studies was held in 50 college teachers in the process of implementing organizational changes; 50 operators of the contact center and 51 employees of the trade organization, whose work is extremely stressful; 45 professionals from different fields, who work remotely during the self-isolation regime established for the prevention of the spread of COVID-19. To solve the research tasks, specially selected methods such as "Job Satisfaction" test and "Strategic Approach to Coping Scale" questionnaire adapted for Russian sample were used. The general features of correlations between the psychological resources of self-regulation and job satisfaction among professionals under increased stress working conditions caused by different reasons have been revealed. Professionals, who are satisfied with their job under stress working conditions, are more characterized by a high degree of career identity and career resilience as components of career motivation, orientation to commitment as a component of hardiness, flexible application of a wide range of resources for self-regulation with a predominance of active, assertive, prosocial and indirect patterns of behaviour. The results of the cycle of the studies can be used to develop programs to improve the psychological well-being and performance of employees in the organizations.

Keywords: Self-regulation resources, job satisfaction, tense work conditions.

1. Introduction

In the modern world, professionals' satisfaction with the work and psychological well-being is becoming increasingly important. This issue is especially acute in the case of professionals working in stress conditions, for example, in the period of self-isolation related to the prevention of the spread of new coronavirus infection COVID-19. It is known that that stress has a negative effect on job satisfaction and increases in it can decrease job satisfaction, delay and absenteeism, and even lead to job abandonment. (Singh et al., 2019). This being said, one of the most important criteria for effective, successful activities, apart from objective ones, is still a subjective assessment of satisfaction with a job (Burić & Moè, 2020; Platis et al., 2015; Trivellas et al., 2015).

It is known that job satisfaction characterizes the work of a professionally successful person and can be considered as an integral indicator of subjective assessment of the results and prospects of work. According to a number of studies, a feeling of satisfaction with work usually arises when a person shows interest in their work, focuses on the job content, works in favorable conditions, has a well-organized working place and work process, when relations with colleagues and management are successfully developing, there is sufficient material reward as well as the prospect of professional growth, and much more (Staempfli & Lamarche, 2020; Zakariya et al., 2020). Job dissatisfaction is one of the main risks of the development of professional and personal deformations, for example, in the form of burnout (Vodopyanova & Starchenkova, 2019).

Büssing and Bissels (1998) note that job satisfaction as a dynamic characteristic is formed in the process of interaction between a person and a work situation. At the same time, it is believed that there is a phenomenon of constructive job dissatisfaction associated with active involvement in processes of organizational changes (Büssing & Bissels, 1998). A number of publications note that job satisfaction can be considered as one of the components of subjective well-being directly related to the work performance (Burić & Moè, 2020; Buntaran et al., 2019; Judge et al., 2001).

Some authors highlight the relationship between job satisfaction and subjective assessment of career success (Boudreau et al., 2001). A number of authors include career resilience as a component of career motivation, the high level of which allows overcoming obstacles to career success. The high level of career resilience is connected with the choice of certain strategies of coping behaviour adequate to the circumstances (Noe et al., 1990). It is shown that the highest level of job satisfaction can be achieved by the high adaptive potential of professionals, who have a diverse arsenal of professionally acceptable resources of self-regulation and apply them adequately to working conditions, which is associated with the successful overcoming of stress in professional activities (Kuznettsova et al., 2019). In some studies a protective function of hardiness, supervisor support, and coworker support as psychological resources that mitigates work stress and enhances job satisfaction was shown (Mccalister et al., 2006). Other study points out that the proactive behaviour can be not only the factor, but also the result of the job satisfaction (Biesok & Wyród-Wróbel, 2017).

The following scheme can be proposed for the analysis of correlations between the psychological resources of self-regulation and job satisfaction under conditions stress in professional activities. At the first stage, the features of tension in professional activities are analyzed, which are interpreted by professional by subjective cognitive evaluation, considering the motivation, especially career and

professional motivation. Secondly, the features of self-regulation resources are studied, and at the third stage the expression of job satisfaction, which is most likely associated with a subjective assessment of career success, is analyzed. The scheme is shown on Figure 1.
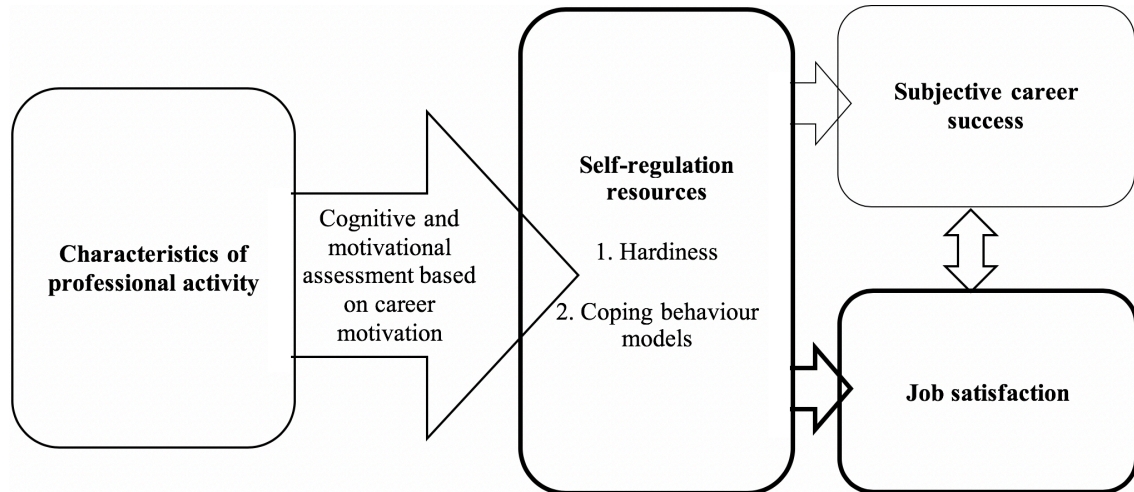
Figure 1. The scheme of analysis of correlations between psychological self-regulation resources with professionals' job satisfaction and subjective assessment of career success under tense working conditions

2. Problem Statement

A cycle of studies within various professional groups was conducted to analyze the correlation of psychological self-regulation resources and job satisfaction under different conditions of increased tension in professional activities.

2.1. Examples of previous studies

Study № 1 was conducted in a group of college teachers, whose professional activity was complicated by introduction of organizational changes, N (hereinafter – a number of participants of the research) = 50. It has been shown that college teachers, who were not quite satisfied with their job, used will effort, heated discussions, such external means of state optimization as taking sedatives, reading prayers and calling friends as typical ways to optimize functional state. The teachers, who were satisfied with their job, used methods based on active change of activities: rearrangement of subjects in their workplace, conversations with colleagues or breaks to solve crossword puzzles and play solitaire (Titova, 2012).

Study № 2 on correlation of psychological functional state self-regulation resources and job satisfaction among contact center operators as professionals, whose work is connected with stress conditions of high emotional saturation (N = 50), revealed the following risk factors of job dissatisfaction growth on the basis of correlation analysis: assertive actions, low commitment as an indicator of hardiness, reduction of typical application of prosocial strategies and cautious copying behaviour. It was revealed that prosocial resources of functional state self-regulation and cautious actions directly correlate with indicators of psychological well-being.

Study № 3. According to the research data on correlations between job satisfaction and professional motivation among doctors (N = 50), whose professional activities are often carried out under emotionally stressful conditions, the following was revealed: the doctors, who are satisfied with their job, demonstrated a high level of career identity and career resilience as components of career motivation, and therefore were well aware of their strengths and weaknesses, and also seek to realize their career goals, for example, they were looking for career advancement opportunities, using appropriate coping behaviour models for this, as opposed to doctors, who are not quite satisfied with their job.

Study № 4. During the research conducted among a professional group of employees of the trade organization (N = 51) involved in emotionally intense activities with customers, colleagues and company management, the following was revealed: employees, who are more satisfied with their job, are characterized by high levels of career identity and career resilience as indicators of career motivation. These employees are more likely to use a variety of coping behaviour: assertive, manipulative, asocial and aggressive actions. At the same time, employees of the trade organization, who are less satisfied with their job, more often use impulsive actions and avoidance as models of coping behaviour. It has been also shown that job satisfaction is directly related to subjective career success.

2.2. The results of the previous studies

It was obtained that professionals working under tense conditions, who are satisfied and dissatisfied with their job, differ in representation of the components of motivation to career, the components of hardiness, typical application of coping models, methods of operative optimization of functional state, and subjective assessment of career success. It would be useful to study the correlation between self-regulation resources and job satisfaction of professionals working under tense conditions caused by the mode of self-isolation, which is introduced for new coronavirus infection COVID-19 prevention.

3. Research Questions

The main question of this this study is how self-regulation resources and job satisfaction of professionals working under tense conditions connected with new form of distant work correlate. This research was held during the period of the self-isolation regime established for the prevention of the spread of COVID-19.

3.1. Characteristics of tense work conditions as a reason for formation of the unfavourable functional states of professionals

The professionals participating in the study had to carry out their job activities in unusual conditions for them – to work remotely without leaving their home. Such professional activity was also complicated by additional distracting factors. Uncertainty about the prospects for the professional future also seems to be an important factor in work stress increase. Most likely, such factors complicating the professional activity may contribute to a high level of anxiety. It is known that a significant level of uncertainty is often associated with increased anxiety (Anderson et al., 2016; Counsell et al., 2017).

3.2. Psychological self-regulation resources as a factor of job satisfaction of professional working under tense condition

It is important to reveal which psychological self-regulation resources prevent anxiety and provide working efficiency expressed through the job satisfaction and subjective assessment of career success among the professionals working under tense conditions caused by the regime of self-isolation, which is introduced for COVID-19 prevention. In this study the role of the features of coping behaviour models is investigated.

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research is to study the correlations between self-regulation resources and job satisfaction in a context of increased work tension caused by the regime of self-isolation, which is introduced for new coronavirus infection COVID-19 prevention.

5. Research Methods

The study was carried out among the group of professionals living in the Russian Federation and working in various fields, who are in self-isolation due to the prevention of the spread of COVID-19 (N = 45). The age of professionals under the research was from 19 to 60 years. Work experience was from six months to 40 years. The professionals filled out the special electronic form including data collection methods selected according to the aim and the hypothesis of the study.

5.1. Hypothesis of this research

The hypothesis of this research is as follows: there are differences in the features of typically used psychological resources of state self-regulation, subjective assessment of career success and anxiety among professionals with different levels of job satisfaction under conditions of increased tension in professional activities associated with the period of self-isolation. In addition, the following assumptions are studied: (1) selection of prosocial and assertive models of coping behaviour is related with job satisfaction under the conditions of increased tension in professional activities associated with self-isolation; (2) job dissatisfaction is associated with the level of anxiety of professionals manifested under increased work stress conditions.

5.2. Methods

The data was collected using a specially formed diagnostic package of techniques, including: 1) a questionnaire to collect biographical data and results of self-assessment of career success, 2) test "Job Satisfaction" by Rozanova (1999) to identify the degree of satisfaction in labor activity; 3) Hobfoll et al.'s (1994) "Strategic Approach to Coping Scale" questionnaire in adaptation of Vodopyanova and Starchenkova (2003) to collect data on typical coping behaviour models; 4) "Trait Anxiety" questionnaire (Hanin & Spielberger, 1983) for the analysis of anxiety as a personality trait. The professionals filled out questionnaires remotely.

6. Findings

The research revealed that despite the current circumstances of professional activities, the majority of the research participants were satisfied with their job. Only three interviewed professionals noted a very high level of job dissatisfaction.

6.1. General findings for the whole group of professionals

Most study participants were characterized by an average level of anxiety with a tendency to growth, which causes concerns about the possible prolonged action of factors of increased tension in remote professional activities. In general, the sampled information revealed the average values of different typical coping behaviour models. A tendency to increase the frequency of use was found in such models of coping behaviour as avoidance, asocial and aggressive behaviour, which may be the risk factors that disturb the effectiveness of professional activities in remote regime and have a negative impact on psychological well-being as well as on interaction with family members.

6.2. Intergroup comparison of indicators among professionals with different levels of job satisfaction under increased stress working conditions associated with the period of self-isolation

Further, the entire sampled information of professionals under the research was divided into subgroups according to the level of job satisfaction: (1) a group of professionals, who were not completely satisfied with their job (N = 8), (2) a group of professionals, who were satisfied with their job at an average level (N = 13), (3) a group of professionals, who were highly satisfied with their job (N = 24). The groups are homogeneous in terms of representatives' biographical indicators.

According to the results of the intergroup comparison, significant differences were found in the indicators of subjective assessment of career success, as well as in the typical use of such a resource of self-regulation as manipulative coping behaviour. As job satisfaction level raises, the typicality of indirect strategies of coping behaviour under self-isolation conditions increases. It has also been found that the higher the career satisfaction is, the higher the subjective assessment of career success will be, which is consistent with data from other studies (Boudreau, et al., 2001). The data are shown in Table 1.

To reveal the correlation between job satisfaction, anxiety and typically applied coping behaviour models, a correlation analysis was carried out, which showed the absence of a significant relationship between job satisfaction and anxiety of professionals, as well as the presence of direct correlation between the level of job satisfaction and subjective assessment of career success (r = 0.537; p = 0) and such a resource of self-regulation as the search for social contact among professionals, who are in the self-isolation regime and who are engaged in professional activities in remote way (r = 0.291; p = 0.049).

Table 1. Intergroup comparison of indicators among professionals with different levels of job satisfaction under increased stress working conditions associated with the period of self-isolation

Indicators	Professionals with low level of job satisfaction (N = 8)	Professionals with average level of job satisfaction (N = 13)	Professionals with high level of job satisfaction (N = 24)	Kruskal–Wallis H test
Negative subjective assessment of career success	m = 2 σ = 0.534	m = 1.46 σ = 0.519	m = 1.125 σ = 0.338	H = 16.019 (p = 0)
Manipulative actions	m = 16.75 σ = 3.412	m = 14.8 σ = 2.3	m = 18.5 σ = 4.364	H = 7.455 (p = 0.024)

The more typical choice to search for social support as a psychological self-regulation resource is related not only to job satisfaction, but also to subjective assessment of career success (r = 0.325; p = 0. 03). The data is presented on Figure 2.
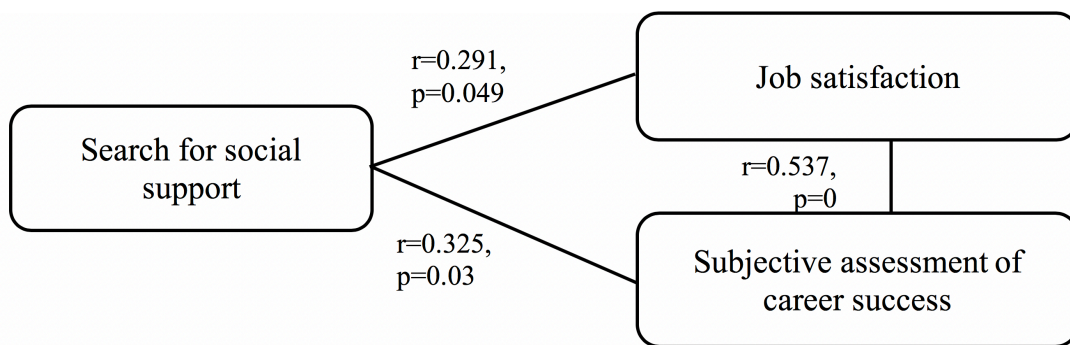
Figure 2. The correlations between psychological self-regulation resources, job satisfaction and subjective assessment of career success

At the same time, significant correlations have been found between the level of anxiety and some typical models of coping behaviour as psychological resources of self-regulation of professionals under conditions of increased labor intensity. The general level of anxiety is directly related to the use of avoidance (r= 0.374; p = 0.011), manipulative (r = 0.343; p = 0.021) and aggressive actions (r = 0.343; p = 0.021), as well as negatively correlates with assertive actions of professionals, who perform their job under self-isolation conditions. More frequent use of avoidance, aggressive and indirect coping behaviour models, as well as a decrease in the frequency of assertive actions may be associated with the risk of increasing of the level of anxiety among the professionals under tense conditions in remote activities.

7. Conclusion

The research revealed the following important results about the correlations between psychological self-regulation resources, job satisfaction, subjective assessment of career success and the level of anxiety among professionals working remotely because of introduction of self-isolation regime.

7.1. Results

There are differences in the types of self-regulation resources commonly used by professionals with different levels of job satisfaction under conditions of increased tension in professional activities associated with the period of self-isolation. For professionals, who are more satisfied with their job, as opposed to those, who are less satisfied with their job, under complicated conditions of atypical remote activities, it is more typical to use manipulative actions as a resource for self-regulation.

It is shown that job satisfaction among professionals, who work in self-isolation regime, is directly related to such a resource of self-regulation as search for social contact, as well as a high level of subjective evaluation of career success.

There is no significant correlation between job dissatisfaction and the level of anxiety of professionals, which manifests itself under increased work tension conditions. It can be assumed that anxiety during the research period does not act as a significant moderator in the formation of job satisfaction even under complicated and atypical conditions of professional activities.

The inverse correlation of manifestations of anxiety under conditions of increased tension in professional activities caused by the self-isolation regime with assertive actions and direct correlation with manipulative, aggressive, avoiding actions have been revealed. Activation of such behaviour patterns in the event of increased anxiety may hinder effective professional activities.

7.2. Outcomes and perspectives of the study

Analyzing the materials of the presented studies, it's possible to note, as a main conclusion, a number of general features of correlation between the psychological self-regulation resources and professionals' satisfaction with their job in conditions of increased work stress. According to the results of research change professionals satisfied with the job and whose work is connected with stress, show a higher degree of career identity and career resilience as components of career motivation, high level of commitment as a component of hardiness, have an arsenal of self-regulatory resources with a predominance of active, assertive, prosocial and indirect models of coping behaviour and apply it flexibly and accordingly to the circumstances. The use of prosocial strategies and cautious actions is associated with a more pronounced level of psychological well-being. In addition, there is a direct correlation between satisfaction with a job and subjective career success and the psychological well-being of professionals working under stress.

In order to develop programs to increase the psychological well-being and work efficiency of employees of the organizations, it is advisable to continue the line of studies on correlations between the psychological resources of self-regulation and job satisfaction of professionals, whose work is associated with stress conditions.

References

Anderson, K. G., Deschênes, S. S., & Dugas, M. J. (2016). Experimental manipulation of avoidable feelings of uncertainty: Effects on anger and anxiety. *Journal of Anxiety Disorders, 41,* 50-58. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.janxdis.2016.03.007

Biesok, G., & Wyród-Wróbel, J. (2017). Job satisfaction and its influence on proactive behaviour. *European Journal of Business Science and Technology, 3,* 44-53. https://doi.org/10.11118/ejobsat.v3i1.81

Boudreau, J. W., Boswell, W. R., & Judge, T. A. (2001). Effects of personality on executive career success in the United States and Europe. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 58,* 53-81. https://doi.org/10.1006/jvbe.2000.1755

Buntaran, F., Andika, D., & Alfiyana, V. (2019). Impact of job satisfaction on job performance. *Review of Behavioral Aspect in Organizations and Society, 1,* 121-128. https://doi.org/10.32770/rbaos.vol1121-128

Burić, I., & Moè, A. (2020). What makes teachers enthusiastic: The interplay of positive affect, self-efficacy and job satisfaction. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 89,* 103008. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2019.103008

Büssing, A., & Bissels, T. (1998). Different forms of work satisfaction: Concept and qualitative research. *European Psychologist, 3*(3), 209-218. https://doi.org/10.1027/1016-9040.3.3.209

Counsell, A., Furtado, M., Iorio, C., Anand, L., Canzonieri, A., Fine, A., Fotinos, K., Epstein, I., & Katzman, M. A. (2017). Intolerance of uncertainty, social anxiety, and generalized anxiety: Differences by diagnosis and symptoms. *Psychiatry Research, 252.* 63-69. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psychres.2017.02.046

Hanin, Y. L., & Spielberger, C. D. (1983). The development and validation of the Russian Form of the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory. *Series in Clinical & Community Psychology: Stress & Anxiety, 2,* 15–26. Retrieved from https://psycnet.apa.org/record/1984-13878-001

Hobfoll, S. E., Dunahoo, C. L., Ben-Porath, Y., & Monnier, J. (1994). Gender and coping: The dual-axis model of coping. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, *22*(1), 49–82. https://doi.org/10.1007/bf02506817

Judge, T. A., Thoresen, C. J., Bono, J. E., & Patton, G. K. (2001). The job satisfaction — job performance relationship: A qualitative and quantitative review. *Psychological Bulletin, 127* (3), 376-407. https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.127.3.376

Kuznettsova, A. S., Titova, M. A., & Zlokazova, T. A. (2019). Psikhologicheskaia samoreguliatsiia funktsional'nogo sostoianiia i professional'naia uspeshnost' [Psychological functional state self-regulation and professional success]. *Vestnik Moskovskogo universiteta. Seriia 14: Psikhologiia, 1.* 51-68. https://doi.org/10.11621/vsp.2019.01.51

Mccalister, K., Dolbier, C., Webster, J., Mallon, M., & Steinhardt, M. (2006). Hardiness and support at work as predictors of work stress and job satisfaction. *American journal of health promotion: AJHP, 20,* 183-91. https://doi.org/10.4278/0890-1171-20.3.183

Noe, A. R., Noe, A. W., & Bachuber, J. A. (1990). An investigation of the correlates of career motivation. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 37,* 340-356. https://doi.org/10.1016/0001-8791(90)90049-8

Platis, C., Reklitis, P., & Zimeras, S. (2015). Relation between job satisfaction and job performance in healthcare services. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences, 175,* 480-487. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2015.01.1226

Rozanova, V. A. (1999). *Psikhologiia upravleniia. Uchebnoe posobie [Psychology of management. Textbook]*. Business School Intel-Sintez.

Singh, M., Amiri, M., & Sabbarwal, S. (2019). Role of job stress on job satisfaction. *International Journal of Management Studies, VI,* 57-60. https://doi.org/10.18843/ijms/v6i4/08

Staempfli, S., & Lamarche, K. (2020). Top ten: A model of dominating factors influencing job satisfaction of emergency nurses. *International Emergency Nursing, 49,* 100814. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ienj.2019.100814

Titova, M. A. (2012). Sredstva samoreguliatsii funktsional'nykh sostoianii prepodavatelei [Functional states self-regulation means in college teachers]. *Professional'noe obrazovanie. Stolitsa, 11,* 44–45. https://www.elibrary.ru/download/elibrary_18042740_92460305.pdf

Trivellas, P., Kakkos, N., Blanas, N., & Santouridis, I. (2015). The impact of career satisfaction on job performance in accounting firms. The mediating effect of general competencies. *Procedia Economics and Finance, 33,* 468-476. https://doi.org/10.1016/S2212-5671(15)01730-X

Vodopyanova, N. E., & Starchenkova, E. S. (2003). Strategii i modeli preodolevaiushchego povedeniia [Strategies and patterns of coping behavior]. In G. S. Nikiforov, M. A. Dmitrieva, V. M. Snetkov (Eds.) *Praktikum po psikhologii menedzhmenta i professional'noi deiatel'nosti [Tutorial on management psychology and professional activities]* (pp. 311–321). Rech'.

Vodopyanova, N. E., & Starchenkova, E. S. (2019). Sindrom vygoraniĭa: diagnostika i profilaktika (3-e izd.) [*Burnout syndrome: diagnosis and prevention* (3rd ed.)]. SPb, Piter. https://elibrary.ru/download/61992471.pdf

Zakariya, Y. F., Bjørkestøl, K., & Nilsen, N. K. (2020). Teacher job satisfaction across 38 countries and economies: An alignment optimization approach to a cross-cultural mean comparison. *International Journal of Educational Research, 101,* 101573. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijer.2020.101573