

**ICHEU 2021**  
**International Conference «Humanity in the Era of Uncertainty»**

**STUDYING THE SELF-KNOWLEDGE OF ADOLESCENTS WITH  
THE LOW LEVEL OF PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING**

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**Abstract**

Upbringing a harmonious personality has become the target of the Russian education system and is used in constructing the state strategy for the development of upbringing. In the scientific world a harmoniously developed adolescent is perceived as a psychologically happy adolescent, therefore, the number of studies that solve the task of content and improvement the psychological well-being of adolescents is increasing and is acquiring special significance for fulfilling new educational tasks. In modern studies, attention is drawn to the role of self-knowledge in the formation of a psychologically healthy personality. The aim of this study was to investigate the features of the content component in self-knowledge of adolescents with a low level of psychological well-being. The respondents included 180 adolescents with different levels of psychological well-being. The adolescents identified using the K. Riff Psychological Well-Being Scale come from 7-11 grades of the schools in Tula and Moscow regions. The degree of the indicators for the content component in self-knowledge was studied and the differences between adolescents with low and high levels of psychological well-being were determined. The study revealed significant differences in self-knowledge of adolescents with high and low levels of psychological well-being. The obtained results of the study make up for the deficiencies in scientific knowledge in the field of adolescent psychology and define the ways to help in harmonizing the inner world of adolescents. The results will be useful in building programs to improve the psychological well-being of adolescents based on helping them in self-knowledge.

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*Keywords:* Adolescents, psychological well-being, self-knowledge, characteristics



## 1. Introduction

The results of modern Russian studies state an increase in the number of adolescents with troubled development and behavior, an increase in various risks among children and adolescents (computer addiction, victimization, anti-vital thoughts and actions, aggression, etc.).

Thus, the psychological science responded to these changes with the increased interest of scientists in the phenomenon of psychological well-being of a person and the search for its causes, structural components and ways to improve it.

In pursuing a scientific search for an answer to the question of predictors for adolescent psychological well-being, scientists note the dependence of this psychological category on various internal and external components. Over the past ten years, the question of the personal determinants for psychological well-being of adolescents has been repeatedly raised by Russian and foreign scientists (Astanina, 2016; Danilova & Rykman, 2020; Gómez-López et al., 2019; Guerra-Bustamante et al., 2019; Laktionova et al., 2021; Leontiev et al., 2018; Lerkkanen et al., 2018; Miklyaeva et al., 2019; Molchanov et al., 2019; Morosanova et al., 2019; Patalay & Fitzsimons, 2018; Proctor et al., 2016; Raible-Destan et al., 2021; Sharma & Chandiramani, 2021; Viejo et al., 2018; Vohra & Pandey, 2020). Determining the characteristics of a psychologically happy person, researchers attach particular importance to personal harmony, the provision of which is associated with the processes of self-regulation and self-knowledge. At the same time, the latter phenomenon is of key importance, expressed in progress in self-development, self-change and personal growth, leading to the harmonious formation of the personality.

At the moment, modern psychological science demonstrates two views on the relationship between self-knowledge and psychological well-being of a person (Griboedova, 2020). One of them is associated with an increase in the psychological well-being of a person engaged in self-knowledge. Scientists who adhere to the second view believe that greater psychological well-being is acquired by those who do not possess a rigidly defined idea of themselves and their characteristics and do not engage in self-knowledge.

Under this contradiction, researchers become even more interested in the influence of self-knowledge on the formation of psychological well-being in adolescence, when self-awareness and self-knowledge become new age-related achievements of an individual.

## 2. Problem Statement

The analysis of modern studies in the psychological well-being of adolescents revealed a shortage of scientific works devoted to the study of this phenomenon in conjunction with self-knowledge, and the fragmentariness of studies as the result of a psychological search for their relationship.

Studying the peculiarities of self-knowledge among adolescents with different levels of psychological well-being will reveal the presence or absence of a mechanism for increasing psychological well-being through the development of self-knowledge, as well as determine the inner foundations for the personal harmony of adolescents.

We have conducted a study of the characteristics of self-knowledge among adolescents with different levels of psychological well-being. The working hypothesis was the assumption that adolescents with different levels of psychological well-being have significant differences in the degrees of indicators

for the content, procedural and functional components of self-knowledge. This article describes a part of this scientific search that deals with the study of the substantive features of self-knowledge among adolescents with the low level of psychological well-being.

Research of self-knowledge among adolescents with a low level of psychological well-being is carried out in the Russian psychology for the first time. It, of course, expands the understanding of these phenomena available in the scientific field of psychology of personality.

The basis for our study was the scientific works of Russian and foreign scientists, reflecting modern views on the problem of studying the personality predictors for psychological well-being among adolescents in general and self-knowledge, in particular.

Most Russian scientists define psychological well-being as a multicomponent phenomenon that characterizes the degree of a person's positive functioning, the realization of their potential, symptomatically determined by the predominance of positive emotions, a subjective feeling of personal harmony, happiness, satisfaction with life and their own achievements.

Foreign scientists have studied and are studying psychological well-being within the problem of positive psychological functioning of an individual (the theories by M. Yakhoda, A. Maslow, D. Birren, K. Rogers, E. Erickson, G. Allport, S. Buhler, C.G. Jung, B. Newgarten). It is by foreign researchers that many scientific works have been written about the characteristics of a psychologically healthy, mature and positively functioning personality. Some of them developed criteria for a psychologically healthy personality (G. Allport), which include self-knowledge, self-acceptance, insight, and emotional balance (Brown, 2013). Others (K. Rogers) include the understanding of their feelings and emotions, motives and needs in the image of a fully functioning personality (Proctor et al., 2016). Others (F. Frankl) include meaningfulness and the ability to self-change in the portrait of a psychologically healthy, well-being person (Ismail & Tekke, 2015). Interest and attention to one's personality and inner self as a criterion of well-being was identified by A. Ellis in the theory of emotional therapy (Brown, 2013).

From the point of view of Russian scientists (Umnyashova, 2019), a psychologically happy teenager is successful in understanding themselves and others, has reflexive abilities, is stress-resistant, is adequate in assessing themselves and their activities, has a high educational motivation, is optimistic, with the dominance of the internal control, able to cooperate with others. Khukhlaeva (2007) highlighted the criteria for the psychological health of schoolchildren that affect their psychological well-being, i.e. a high level of reflection development, positivity in self-awareness and perception of the world, the desire for self-change and for the improvement of the world, harmony in living through age crises, good adaptation to society and the ability to perform social roles.

Dubrovina (2017), the founder of health psychology in Russian psychology, distinguishes self-interest, the desire for free self-expression, and the awareness of one's exceptionality when characterizing a psychologically happy schoolchild.

Scientific interest in the issue of connection between self-knowledge and psychological well-being is determined by the close relations between the concept of positive functioning and psychological well-being. At the same time, the connection is significant between the psychological integrity of a person and their satisfaction with life, the degree of realization of the need and the ability of the individual for self-development and self-change.

The analysis of the research on this topic has shown that the problem of the relations between self-knowledge and psychological well-being of a person has been developed to a greater extent by foreign researchers. The scientific works that became the semantic foundation of our research are the studies that confirmed that psychologically healthy (happy) people are characterized by accurate self-knowledge (Yakhoda, Maslow, Fromm, Rogers, Menninger, Allport). However, against the background of the widespread opinion of some scientists about the existence of a direct influence of self-knowledge on the psychological well-being of a person, a group of researchers stands out who claim that accurate self-knowledge reduces the psychological well-being of an individual and is a barrier to achieving this well-being. So Hazlitt (2013) argued the benefits of self-deception for happiness and the effect of self-reflection on the impairment of life (as cited in Brown, 1991). Taylor and Brown (1994) have a common semantic field with Hazlitt on this issue. They came to the assertion that psychologically happy people do not differ in defined self-knowledge and, to a greater extent, in comparison with dysfunctional people, ascribe positive qualities to themselves; that psychological health (happiness) is promoted by reasonable positive illusions about themselves, their actions and deeds. The point of view of these scientists was supported by the findings in the studies by Levinson, Michelle, Barton, Campbell and Fechner, who argued that most people tend to overestimate themselves and their positive qualities, and this is especially characteristic of people who feel psychologically comfortable and well (as cited in Colvin & Block, 1994; Diener et al., 1999; Hoyer & Klein, 2000).

To a lesser extent, studies of the relationship between self-knowledge and psychological well-being are presented in Russian psychology. A scientific search on this issue was carried out by Troshikhina et al. (2019) - focus on self-development is determined by a predictor of psycho-emotional well-being of adolescents; Danilova and Rykman (2020) determined that awareness and motivation for self-development increase the psycho-emotional well-being of adolescents. Feldman (2018) identified the connection between self-development and psychological well-being; Griboyedova (2019) dealt with the study of the autopsychological competence of adolescents as a result of self-knowledge. Bysova and Perikova (2018), Tkach and Bondareva (2016), Semenovskikh and Pestryakova (2018) pointed the connection between reflection and psychological well-being.

Thus, after analyzing Russian and foreign studies, we came to the conclusion that there is a shortage of complete scientifically reliable studies of the influence of self-knowledge on the psychological well-being of adolescents. The scientific studies are fragmentary; the representation of the study of this scientific problem in the adolescent environment is insufficient.

To fill this gap, we conducted a study to identify and describe the content, procedural and functional features of self-knowledge among adolescents with different levels of psychological well-being. At the same time, by self-knowledge of adolescents with different levels of psychological well-being, we understand the process of a person's cognition of their Self and its manifestations in internal dialogue, communication with others and their own activity, carried out with the help of identification and reflection through the use of detection, fixation, analysis, assessment and acceptance of their potential and actual properties and features, which has different expressiveness of content, procedural and functional components.

We have developed a theoretical model of self-knowledge among adolescents with different levels of psychological well-being, which combined its meaningful, procedural and functional components. The study of the degrees represented for the indicators of one of the components is presented in this article.

Difficulties in the development of this topic included the lack of tools in both Russian and foreign science for an accurate study of self-knowledge of adolescents.

### **3. Research Questions**

The subject of the research consists in self-knowledge among adolescents with the low level of psychological well-being. Research questions are as follows.

- 3.1.** Are there any differences in the degree of exposure of the content component indicators of self-knowledge among adolescents with different levels of psychological well-being?
- 3.2.** What are the specific features of self-knowledge among adolescents with the low level of psychological well-being?

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

Studying the characteristics of self-knowledge among adolescents with the low level of psychological well-being is the purpose of the study.

### **5. Research Methods**

The study involved 500 adolescents aged 12-17 from Tula and Moscow regions.

At the first stage of scientific research, the respondents were diagnosed with the methods for studying psychological well-being. Taking into account the results obtained, 180 adolescents with clear level indicators of psychological well-being were identified. They were then divided into three groups: adolescents with high ( $n = 80$ ), medium ( $n = 80$ ) and low ( $n = 80$ ) levels of psychological well-being.

At the second stage of the research, the degree of expression of the content, procedural and functional components of self-knowledge was studied among adolescents of each level group. Also, the need for self-knowledge, interest in oneself, objective, evaluative and project self-knowledge, reflexivity and degrees in types of reflection, anxiety, style of self-regulation of behavior and strategies of self-presentation were investigated.

In this article we will provide the results of investigating the degree of indicators for the content component in self-knowledge for the respondents with the low level of psychological well-being. The article will also show the comparative analysis of the data obtained with similar results for the adolescents with the high level of psychological well-being.

## 6. Findings

The results of our study are the empirical data on the differences in the manifested degrees of indicators for the content component of self-knowledge among adolescents with the low level of psychological well-being from the results of respondents with the high level of psychological well-being.

A comparative analysis of the self-knowledge of psychologically happy and psychologically dysfunctional adolescents was carried out under the theoretical model of self-knowledge of adolescents with different levels of psychological well-being, developed by the authors of this article, and was determined by analyzing the differences in the fullness of all components in self-knowledge.

A comparative analysis of the features of the content component in self-knowledge among adolescents with the low level of psychological well-being showed differences in the degrees of the need for self-knowledge, self-interest, indicators of subject, evaluative and project self-knowledge.

Using the Kruskal-Wallis H-test for the general sample of adolescents, we identified statistically significant differences in the exposure degrees of most indicators for the content component for self-knowledge among adolescents with low and high levels of psychological well-being. The need for self-knowledge ( $H = 2.932$  with  $p = 0.010$ ), self-interest ( $H = 2.452$  at  $p = 0.043$ ), self-esteem ( $H = 4.427$  at  $p = 0.000$ ) estimates the global attitude towards oneself ( $H = 4.232$  at  $p = 0.000$ ). The indices in the group of adolescents with the low level of psychological well-being are lower than those of psychologically happy adolescents.

The obtained results of the study allow us to assert that adolescents with the low level of psychological well-being are characterized by:

- lower indicators of the need for self-knowledge in comparison with psychologically well-being adolescents and are mostly represented by the intermediate deficit average (71%) and low (17%) levels of the need for self-knowledge (psychologically well-being: high (42%), very high (29%) and average (29%) levels);
- lower degree of self-interest and are represented by adolescents who have no interest in themselves (62%), who have a pronounced (24%) and well pronounced (14%) interest in themselves (psychologically prosperous adolescents are characterized by a pronounced (43%) and well pronounced (43%) interest for self);
- demonstration of, in general, less knowledge about themselves and their personal qualities, but more knowledge about their negative qualities, in comparison with adolescents with the high level of psychological well-being; the number of their negative qualities, as seen by themselves, prevail over the positive characteristics of themselves;
- having a more pronounced image of the "reflexive I", to a greater extent, they show the problem image of the I, and the images of the "social I" and "physical I" are formed to a lesser extent;
- lower self-esteem in comparison with psychologically well-being adolescents and are mostly represented by respondents with an average (69%) and low (24%) level of self-esteem (psychologically happy ones are characterized by high 71% and average 29% self-esteem);

- in the group of adolescents with the low level of psychological well-being, more respondents were identified, demonstrating a low (45%) and medium (36%) degree in the assessment of the global attitude towards themselves in comparison with psychologically well-being adolescents, 100% demonstrating a high assessment of the global attitude towards themselves;
- a lower degree of self-perception in terms of their long-term plans, intentions, dreams in comparison with adolescents with the high level of psychological well-being;
- notions of happiness that are different from psychologically happy adolescents - the most pronounced are the notions of happiness associated with satisfying the need for general well-being in life ("so that everything is good"), the need for successful (providing support, understanding) communication with friends and family, and with the satisfaction of the need for self-knowledge and self-change of their personality. Among the psychologically happy adolescents ideas about happiness are associated with a person's success in planned affairs, life actions, favorite business, which is important to find and to successfully realize and with receiving material benefits).

## 7. Conclusion

The data obtained show statistically significant and qualitative differences in all the studied indicators of the content component of self-knowledge in psychologically dysfunctional and psychologically happy adolescents. The data may indicate that adolescents with the low level of psychological well-being are characterized by lower indicators of the studied component of self-knowledge.

Summing up the results of the study, we can state that the psychological well-being of adolescents with the low level of psychological well-being shows some specific features in comparison with adolescents with the high level of psychological well-being. It can be assumed that there is a connection between the degree of the content component indicators of self-knowledge formed and the level of psychological well-being of adolescents.

In the future, this study can be expanded by the study of the auto psychological competence of adolescents as a result of self-knowledge; by the development of a program to improve the psychological well-being of adolescents using methods to develop their self-knowledge and a deeper study of the personality traits of adolescents with different levels of psychological well-being.

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