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**PECULIARITIES OF LIFE-SENSE ORIENTATIONS OF
PERSONALITIES IN CONTEXT OF SELF-DETERMINATION IN
ADOLESCENCE**

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Abstract

The present article considers the questions of semantic sphere of a person in youth in the context of professional and personal self-determination. The main emphasis is made on the study of the peculiarities of life-sense orientations of adolescent personality. Special attention is paid to the peculiarities of life-sense orientations of a person, their content and orientation at this stage of ontogenesis. The results of the empirical research of semantic sphere of personality are described. They are obtained with the usage of the technique "Value-based Orientation" by M. Rokich, the reflective self-report inventory "Who Am I?" by V. Muhina, the "Life-Sense Orientations" test by D. Leontiev, and statistical data processing. According to the results of the research, the author concludes that the formation of life-sense orientations of adolescent personality has its own specific features depending on a number of influencing factors. They are as follows: involvement in professional activity, presence or absence of a partner and composition of parental family. The value of the analysis of peculiarities of life-sense orientations of adolescent personality is determined by the dramatic impact of this age stage on the formation of value system and worldview. It enables creating an internal autonomous system of personal landmarks and content of value-semantic sphere of personality. Personality develops and shapes an individual orientation of life path interacting with moral values and spiritual and social foundations.

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Keywords: Personality, meaning of life, life-sense orientations, preadult age.



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1. Introduction

A person's phenomenological ability to be the subject of his own life path and develop in the current cultural and historical space enables him to form life-sense orientations that define a person's motives and actions.

Life-sense orientation is complex socio-psychological units created by significant life relations between personality and existence. Life-sense orientations or life strategies are one of the most influential components of integral individuality, forming personality sociogenesis. Correlation with individual needs aimed at an adequate self-realization is a key factor for the formation of a permanent set to solve the problem of public and personal importance, although the essence of this problem changes along with a person's life experience. In addition, it contributes to forming a person's attitude to himself as a value and conviction that the most important way to approve the value of a person is the constant accomplishment of acts and actions. Life strategies play an important role in the direction, orientation and regulation of relations between people and society.

In adolescence, new goals and new social roles are observed, and the process of further age-related socialization takes place. The change of consciousness is accompanied by forming qualitatively new social and personal meanings. The result of this transformation is a unique system of interrelated life-sense orientations.

Preadult or adolescent age is characterized by such central new formations as personal and professional self-determination. Personal self-determination is the identification of oneself as personality; a permanent sensation of one's self to my own inner self. Professional identity is one of the forms of personal self-determination, the process of forming the attitude to professional activity, the way of its realization by coordination of personal and socio-professional needs. As a part of personal and professional self-determination, an individual begins to perceive oneself as a social unit of society; life-sense orientations integrate into the system of relations which is the basis for worldview.

Thus, an important premise of the successful self-realization of a person is the system of life-sense orientations coherent with public purposes and personal sense defining behaviour, choice, direction and interests of each separate individual.

This study of the peculiarities of life-sense orientations is based on theoretical ideas of Russian and foreign authors.

The analysis of the social dependence of a person and its relations takes an important place in the works of the Russian authors. For example, according to L. Vygotsky, a person should not be considered in isolation from society and its social environment. L. Vygotsky even introduces a special concept of "social development situation" in his cultural-historical theory. He believes that an individual under the conditions of culture and direct communication with other people assigns the cultural values of this society, and these values are "embedded into" the individual's consciousness through the process of internalization (Vygotsky, 1996). Thus, the meanings and the value orientations are the products of cultural-historical process. They are assigned by a person and become an integral part of self-consciousness.

A. Leontiev believes that value attitude to the world and social environment is formed due to activity. And this attitude, in its turn, is a necessary basis for personal development and life landmarks. On this basis, A. Leontiev makes the logical conclusion that the formation of personality is a change in the system of

relations and hierarchy of sense-forming motives in the process of activity and interaction with other people and in communication. A. Leontiev writes: "Sense is generated by real relations connecting the subject and objective reality. Given that, direct sources of sense-forming are the needs and motives of a person" (Leontiev, 2004). The author writes that, personal senses are of "over-individual" character and, consequently, do not represent mercenary interest in the usage of any means or satisfaction of situational needs and motives. It aims at future goals and socially significant activity that implicates intentionality of human actions.

S. Rubinstein considers the values of personality and states: "Values are derivatives from the relationship between the world and a person. They express everything that is crucial for a person in the world, including the creations made by human in the process of history." (Rubinstein., 1998). In other words, S. Rubinstein emphasizes the importance of subjective attitude to the world and its transformative activity. He believes that life orientation, being special meaningful value dimensions, characterize the subject as a person. "A person asserts, protects, and implements in actions, in interpersonal relations, in affairs his or her spirituality, morality, values of truth, justice, and good. The subject performs these functions, including the real transformation of the world, adaptation to it, coping with difficulties, self-consciousness and reflective "operations", in the course of vital activity" (Rubinstein, 1998).

Speaking of preadult age as a special stage of ontogenesis, cultivating and strengthening the existing senses in a person, following the ideas of E. Erickson, we define the preadult age to be a stage of the acquisition of self-identity as one's self. This allows to form a qualitatively new relationship between the individual and world and develop individual attitude to it (Erikson, 1996).

According to L. Bozhovich, preadult age is characterized by the need for self-determination. In its turn, it will combine the personal, professional, spiritual, and moral establishment of a person and allow forming a certain semantic system that will define personal development in the subsequent stages of ontogenesis (Bozhovich, 1997).

Following the ideas of B. Bratus on the semantic sphere of personality, we define it as a single system including motives, life-sense orientations and personal values that are not disjointed but form a single structural and dynamic organization that contributes to the creation of a unique inner world of personality (Bratus', 1988).

In this connection, D. Leontiev's idea about life-sense orientations of a person as a system of conscious and selective relations determining the direction of a person, the awareness of its choices and evaluations is of particular interest (Leontiev, 2007).

V. Mukhina describes the period of adolescence and stated that at this age a person faces the problem of choosing life values. A person seeks to form internal attitude towards himself and others as well as moral values. I.e., a young person perceives, interprets and assigns some social values of others (Muhina, 2012).

Summarizing the theoretical notions considered, we believe that life-sense orientations determine the central position of personality that gives sense to the individual's existence in the process of formation at all the age stages and is one of the main spiritual needs at any age.

In youth, a person is involved in experiences associated with mental activity. He or she is especially sensitive to new discoveries, forms their own thinking, life-sense orientations, and values that accompany an individual throughout the life. The social situation of personality development at preadult age is

characterized primarily by the fact that young men and women have to start their working career and determine their place in the society quite independently. Personal self-determination sets a personal orientation to achieve a certain level in the system of social relations, to fulfil the demands placed on a person, i.e., defines social self-determination. On the basis of social self-determination, the requirements to the certain professional field develop, and the professional self-determination of a person is carried out.

Self-determination, both professional and personal, becomes the central new formation of early adolescence (Erikson, 1996). It is a new internal position including awareness of oneself as a social unit of society and acceptance of one's place in it. Personal self-determination is identification of oneself concerning the criteria of personal formation developed in the society and further effective realization of oneself on the basis of these criteria. Professional self-determination is a person's identification of oneself concerning the criteria of professionalism developed in the society (and accepted by this person). But the leading importance in professional self-determination belongs to personality, its activity and responsibility for its formation. Activity of a person implies his interaction with social environment, surrounding people and development of internal mental functions. When interacting with the surrounding world, changes within the components of the semantic sphere of personality occur. The present article analyses possible factors that influence these changes.

2. Problem Statement

On the one hand, attitude towards professional sphere is formed on the basis of the system of personal senses of an individual, and the personal meanings are determined by the previous experience; the perceived part of this system has the form of values and life-sense orientations. On the other hand, professional activity influences the system of life-sense orientations of a person.

3. Research Questions

3.1. What are the peculiarities of the semantic sphere of personality at preadult age?

3.2. What are the peculiarities of the content and orientation of the semantic sphere of personality at preadult age?

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to identify the peculiarities of a person's life-sense orientations in the context of professional and personal self-determination.

5. Research Methods

The procedure of the empirical research included the diagnosis of the semantic sphere of personality in adolescence and identification of peculiarities of this sphere at the considered stage of ontogenesis.

5.1. Subjects (cases)

106 people (who we accepted as 100%) took part in the present study. There were 53 young males (50%) and 53 young females (50%), with different attitudes to religion, raised in two-parent or one-parent

families, having a partner or not, and studying in general medicine, pedagogy and psychology, social pedagogics and psychology, psychology and psychology of education.

5.2. Procedure

Psychodiagnostic tools were used to study the peculiarities of life-sense orientations of personality at adolescent age. These included such techniques as: the questionnaire containing questions about age, sex, social status and the open question "what is sense of life for you?", the depth-related reflective self-report test "Who am I?" by V. Mukhina's (Muhina, 2008), "The test of life-sense orientations" by D. Leontiev (LO) (Leontiev, 2006); "Value orientation" by M. Rokich's (Rokich, et al., 2009) as well as content analysis. For mathematical data processing of the obtained results, we used the criterion of N-Kruskal-Wallis, cluster analysis, applied programs package on statistical processing of SPSS data.

6. Findings

The first stage of the research was the author's questionnaire, the questions related to personal data and social status of the respondents, their purposes and description of the meaning of life. This questionnaire was processed with the help of content-analysis of the answers of the external experts and students on the category "meaning of life". We worked out categories, which project a sketch of life-sense orientations of adolescent personality, proceeding from those meanings and tasks of personality development relevant to a person for the present.

1. «Family»
2. «Profession»
3. «Self-realization»
4. «Physical and mental health»
5. «Freedom»
6. «Religiousness»
7. «Love»
8. «Travel»
9. «Personality qualities»

When comparing the results of the responses of the external experts with the respondents' answers, the most preferred and most common responses in the categories "family", "profession", «physical and mental health» are identified. This trend suggests that at preadult age the issues of the future career, formation of the internal potential of an individual, care of physical well-being and the search for a partner are the most relevant. Preadult age is the beginning of formation of one's own point of view on the future family. Undoubtedly, support of a significant person, a partner to share with not only worldview, but also a way of life and future aspirations are important in this period.

We calculated the frequency (N) and percentage of the responses in the dominant categories: "Family", N = 48, this was the meaning of life for 48.3% of the respondents. This category was represented by the following answers: "a secure family", "to start a family", "to start a close-knit family and have children", "to have a family" and "to give birth to children and start a family". "Profession" N = 43, this was determined as the meaning of life by 45% of the people. The most frequent answers were the following:

"to be successful at work", "to self-actualize in career sphere", "to get a decent job", "to have a successful career", "to become a professional", "to get a good profession" and "to get a profession". Category "Self-realization" N = 37, for 36.7% of the respondents this was the sense. The answers presented in this category were as follows: "to self-realize in life", "to discover as many of your abilities as possible", "to achieve success", "to become self-sustained", "to achieve success", "to have a wealthy life", "to get rich financially and spiritually", "to leave the trail", "to become a top-ranked specialist", "to become successful" and "to find your calling". These three categories received the most frequent answers. And this fact characterizes the sense and orientation of the semantic sphere of personality in the professional and personal self-determination.

The categories "freedom of pondering", "corporeal and spiritual health" and "personality qualities" received the least often answers. The frequency in these categories were equal: N = 14, which was 10% of the respondents from the total number of the people.

The second stage of the study divided the sample into homogeneous groups, so that the respondents similar in psychological characteristics were included in one group.

All the results were subject to cluster analysis. We used the method of hierarchical cluster structure, which enabled us to allocate three clusters.

The first cluster conventionally named "**Rationalists**" included 32 people (30,1% of the total number of the sample): 22 females and 10 males. All of them had grown up in two-parent families. They considered themselves to be religious, having a partner. General index of life comprehension in this group was 147.6. The process of their life at the present time is perceived as interesting and emotionally saturated. Understanding and comprehension of desirable goals in the future gave sense to the whole life of the person. This type was characterized by high scores for the «locus-control - me" and "locus-control-purpose" scales. They were ready to do their best to get the desired result.

The goals posed were the most real to them. It promoted harmony between the inner state and surrounding reality. The subjects under test in this cluster of terminal values pointed to the paramount importance of the following values: physical and mental health, harmonious and spiritual relationships with the partner and a happy wealthy family life. In instrumental values there were strong will, ability to insist on one's own, not to shrink back before obstacles, and humor and cheerfulness.

The subjects under test of this cluster were characterized by positioning themselves through personally meaningful qualities, claims for personal growth, value-based attitude to freedom of expression, normativity of tradition, and family and ancestral roots. Marginalization was poorly expressed, which characterized the recipients as capable of overcoming a person's self-isolation or fixation on the dominant objective or subjective problem.

The second cluster was conventionally named "**Keeper**". It included 32 people (30.1% of the total number of the sample): 20 females and 18 males. All of them had grown up in two-parent families. They considered themselves to be religious, having a partner. General index of life comprehension was 149, 2.

These people know what they want from life. They have clear goals and intentions in any business and rely on themselves mainly. They believe that everything needs to be under control, and it is they who manage their lives, so that socio-economic, political or other factors cannot be an obstacle for them.

They mentioned the following terminal values: development, productive and high relations with the partner, feeling of comfort and support from friends; Among instrumental values there were paramount importance of an interesting and fascinating professional job, productive life and full use of opportunities.

The subjects of this cluster were also characterized by their focus on socially important roles (a student, a sister and a friend). It was especially important for them to have leading and successful positions in the society. They were able to reflect on themselves and the surrounding world; they were ready to ponder the meaning of their own existence in the world and personal growth.

The third cluster was conventionally named "**Fatalists**". It included 14 people (13,2 % of the total number of the sample): 4 females and 10 males. All of them had grown up in two-parent families. They considered themselves to be religious, having a partner. The indicator of life comprehension in this group was 109,6.

The subjects of this cluster believed that nothing depended on them in their life, and their fate was not fair. They could not change anything, but the feeling of dissatisfaction with the result of their lives did not motivate any change. Basically, the people of this type had not determined their life plans and goals yet. They believed that they still had a lot of time for it. This type was characterized by the dissatisfaction with the part of their life they had already spent. The personal meanings lack orientation and time perspective.

Among the terminal values, there are values of leisure pursuit, absence of duties, and finding a partner who shares the current lifestyle. Their instrumental values are: ability to obey, to contemplate beauty and a gift of vivid imagination. Marked marginalization (beautiful, hardworking, normal) is typical for this cluster. The marginal type of self-reflection is characterized by person's self-isolation, position of a victim of circumstances, lack of belief in self-sufficiency, linguistic marginality.

The results of the deep self-reflexive test "Who am I?" designed by V. Mukhina's showed differences in the answers of males and females. Young males underline belonging to their nation, civic patriotism, patriotic sentiments and ideas, social roles pointing at ancestry, as well as individual qualities and claims of personal growth in the future. Females often give answers related to socially important roles within the family, mention their religion, image their future by the role of "a good wife, and a good mother", i.e. they are oriented towards social achievements in the future. The civil position is seldom highlighted in the answers (comparing with the answers of males).

High results on the scale of life comprehension of the first and second clusters correlate with the presence of the partner and the composition of the parent family.

The factor of religiousness included the reference to the religion of the subject, but the mathematical processing of the data showed small data due to uneven representation of existing religions in respondents' answers.

7. Conclusion

The basic hypothesis of our study consists in that the content of life-sense orientations at preadult age reflects the process of professional and personal self-determination of a person. As a result of our empirical research, it has been proved with the results of the conducted empirical research.

A specific hypothesis that the formation of life-sense orientations of an adolescent person can be influenced by such factors as involvement in professional activity, presence or absence of a partner, parent family composition and attitude to religion, has been partially confirmed.

Based on the foregoing, the following conclusions have been made. Firstly, the life-sense orientations of an individual are a complex dynamic unit that reflects the processes of a person's development and activity in interaction with the society. Secondly, the life-sense orientations of adolescent personality are aimed at personal and professional self-determination. Thirdly, the content of the semantic sphere of adolescent personality is determined by the tasks of professional establishment, search for a partner and personal self-determination. And fourthly, life-sense orientations of males and females at this age are similar and aimed at specific goals serving as images of the desired future.

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