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**SUBJECTIVE WELLBEING OF TEENAGERS AS A RESULT OF**  
**TRUST RELATIONSHIPS DEVELOPMENT**

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*Abstract*

The authors provide an overview of the studies and results of measuring teenagers' personal preferences with regard to behavioural and moral features which can serve as a basis for different forms of trust. Trust relations are considered to be essential to social transactions of adolescents and their cognitive and emotional capabilities. The evolutionary trust relations from deterrence-based trust to calculus-based trust are linked with the teenager's taking into account the utility of subject-subject interaction together with the estimation of costs of these relationships. A significant role in adolescents' relationships is played by affect-based trust. However, cognitive and communication potential of young people allows them to develop trust based on materialization of positive prognostic expectations and the partners' behaviour results on the basis of common attitudes, motives, and goals. The development of knowledge-based trust is inseparably connected with cognitive aspects of adolescents' interpersonal relationships and their evaluation of activity-driven, meaning-oriented and value aspects of interaction. The study of teenagers' predisposition to trust has showed its incomplete formation with respect to identification-based trust and available reserves for developing this type of trust. Development of trust relationships determines the inclusion of trust factor in an ensemble of conditions and parameters of personality subjective wellbeing. The study carried out demonstrates different correlation in teenagers' estimates of trust forms and parameters of subjective wellbeing. It also shows their commitment to interpersonal trust at the level of affect – based trust and knowledge– based trust.

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**Keywords:** Trust, personality orientation, affect – based trust, knowledge – based trust, subjective well-being. .



## 1. Introduction

Consideration of trust relations has been the subject of research for representatives of various fields of knowledge. Scholarly efforts at the intersection of psychology and economics are recognized by the Nobel Prize Committee. Mass opinion polls are conducted to identify trust levels and orientations in the society (All-Russia Public Opinion Research Center, World Values Survey, Edelman Trust Barometer, European Social Survey).

But while elaborating the phenomenon of trust among children there is little research that examines the importance of trust relationships for the formation of their subjective wellbeing.

Upon entering into trust relationships the subject expands the boundaries of his cognitive sphere, deepens dyadic interaction, and in his individual system of “strategic planning” counts on adequate and responsible behaviour in response.

Trust as pivotal children’s attitude towards themselves, others and the socium has a structure (Myasischev, 1982) which involves emotional, cognitive, and behavioural components and is connected with personality orientation to his/her subjective wellbeing improvement. And “the dependence of emotional-and-evaluative attitude on favourable environment is not direct; it is conditioned by norm-value and meaning-based perceptions” (Dontsov et al., 2016, p. 5). Trust in themselves among teenagers acts as a relatively free-standing intrapersonal phenomenon determining the development of holistic personality and value orientation to other people. A negative factor of forming trust relationship with children leads to destructive and aggressive forms of self-assertiveness (Astaniina, 2011), which upsets optimal interaction of the teenager with people around and inhibits the functional formation of his subjective wellbeing.

A considerable resource for understanding the role of trust in the development of children’s subjective wellbeing is offered by the treatment of trust as a meta-relationship that evolves in the subject/subject interaction. “The key features of trust as a meta-relationship – generalization and constriction of other relationships..., background character for other relationships, potential for forecasting and determination of other relationships” (Astaniina, 2011).

An ability of trust develops in the form of basic trust (E. Erikson) as one of the most ancient ontogenetic phenomena. Basic trust deficit can provoke the child’s aggressiveness, suspicion, protest attitudes to socium. Resulting from this mistrust which hampers the teenager’s subjective wellbeing stems from the nature of his mother relations with him as the child. In other words, a rejection style of mother/infant relationships determines the rejection style in the structure of trust relationships of the “Child” with “Others”. The study into the formation of subjective wellbeing of children whose process of socialization takes place in orphanage demonstrates that emotional and behavioural experiences of children being raised without any parents or other family members can lead to a collapse in basic trust (Avdeeva & Mescheryakova, 1991). An essential contraction of communication sphere, disenrichment of emotional sphere, lack of “mother-child” contact and formalization of cognitive sphere result in the evolvement of suspicion and mistrust, aggressiveness, the child’s low self-esteem, which distorts the conditions and prospects of his subjective wellbeing.

The emergence of the need for communication is coupled with the development of inclination to trust relationships based on both the partner’s emotional attractiveness and psychological affinity. Cognitive-affective aspect plays a vital role in the evolution of the child’s trust relationships. A

differentiating interconnection is established between the child and his interaction partner, and this link involves the assessment of emotional attractiveness and safety of the potential trust object.

The study conducted by A.B. Kupreychenko showed that trust relationships in this age group are characterized by ambiguity of trust subjects' features and prevalence of trust relationships' benefits on the basis of awareness of interpersonal relations' partner and high demand of him (Kupreychenko, 2012).

Teenagers experience the evolvement of cognitive, individual and behavioural foundations of trust. Problems associated with honesty, human decency, and justice as well as other socio-moral phenomena, stir interest of this age group. Correlation of moral orientations' content with the role of trust in the process of communication alongside with shaping of the entire system of values and attitudes occurs.

## **2. Problem Statement**

The evolution of trust relationships is inseparable from recognizing the communication partner's worthiness, his value in interpersonal interaction and for the development of subjective wellbeing of the trust relationships' subject. At that harmonious evolvement of trust relationships is grounded on an interlocutory system of interaction when each partner operates on the assumption of "Another" equivalence. In the research on the process of children's subjective wellbeing formation it is very important to identify orientation of personality as a weighty personality feature of the subject of cognition and social interaction' attitude towards other people and the socium. One cannot help taking into consideration the shaping of attitude to self in the process of personal and trust relationships' development.

In their works R.J. Lewicki, B.B. Bunker showed that trust is a dynamic phenomenon that manifests itself in a different way at primary, developing and mature stages of relationships (Lewicki & Bunker, 1995, p. 142). According to their ideas the evolution of trust relationships has certain logic: from calculus – based trust, grounded on calculation and widely spread, to knowledge – based trust, grounded on awareness. The first level of trust is the development of basic trust grounded on horriification (deterrence – based trust) since trust is bolstered with apprehension about being punished for unfulfilled promises and breaking the content of trust relationships (Lewicki & Bunker, 1995, p. 145). O.Y. Zotova stated that "thanks to basic trust the individual focuses on creating and accepting his own identity" (Zotova, 2017, p. 209). On this basis in the course of interpersonal interaction calculus – based trust evolves depending on the individual' benefits from these relationships, costs for this interaction and for its breaking with regard to the child's personality formation.

The evolution of the child's interpersonal relationships leads to such a level of rational interaction when it is possible to predict the partners' reactions and interaction consequences. In such situations knowledge – based trust (KBT) grounded on cognitive aspects of interpersonal relations is formed. The cognition of "Another" approaching the level of complete internalization lays the groundwork for trust development of the child who completely understands his potential object of trust relationships, comes into line with his stance and sets. The consideration of trust relationships' development with the account of common goal-attitude of the subjects of interaction demonstrates the view of trust grounded on friendly relationships or closeness of knowledge – based positions (Williams, 1988). The research shows that changes of trust level correlate with the fulfillment of positive expectations in the course of subject-subject interaction and result from their behaviour in terms of common goals and interests (Gambetta, 1988).

At the level of mutual understanding of the interaction subjects identification– based trust (IBT) emerges when each subject is ready to guard interests and intentions, goals and values of Another. The achievement of this trust form creates solid foundations for children’s subjective wellbeing since it determines their satisfaction with both communication and their relationship’ character, and with the situation of their communication, security and development.

In the paper published in 1995 Lewicki and Bunker showed the evolution of trust forms and their interconnection with behaviour and communication outcomes. In 2006 Lewicki in collaboration with McAllister and Chaturvedi refined the initial interpretation and addressed the importance and complexity of the formation of identification – based trust compared to other level of trust relationships. For trust evolving and disposition to mistrust, typical of teenager personality, avoiding, it is significant that “further relationship development, through repeated interaction and interdependence elaboration seen as mutually beneficial, would make the relationship increasingly unique and personal. In addition, such relationship development would provide the foundation for IBT emergence” (McAllister et al., 2006, G. 2).

In the trust relationships’ evolution of emerging teenager’s personality such a form of trust as affect– based one grounded on the nature of emotional relations and communication interaction also plays a notable role. Although the argument of the interaction partner’s emotional attractiveness can mean a lot to a teenager, as the goal of scientific examination of children trust relationships it is seen as non-representational (McAllister et al., 2006, G. 3). A set to trust predisposition which is treated as an emerging psychological feature of an individual is of great importance. In the process of teenagers trust relationships’ elaboration personal traits of a teenager were found to be significant. Friendliness, interest in “Another”, sensitivity to him are likely to promote trust relationships and their forms’ evolution (Barber, 1983).

Following Shapiro, Scheppard and Cheraskin (1992), researchers argue that different forms of trust relationships are based on different level of the trustee knowledge, awareness of his motives, goals as well as the possibility to agree with him upon sets, values and parameters of subjective wellbeing. The development of mentioned trust forms correlate with the evolvement of the child subjective wellbeing level. “By understanding how trust changes, grows, and declines, we may also understand how relationships change, grow, and decline” (Lewicki & Bunker, 1995, p. 144). Once the teenager is satisfied with his life, his relationships with “Others” and his role relationships, it determines the development of his subjective wellbeing, self-acceptance and the growth of self-esteem.

### **3. Research Questions**

**3.1.** Is predisposition to trust relationships a component of the teenager’s personality orientation?

**3.2.** Are personal preferences of teenagers connected with the formation of their trust relationships?

**3.3.** Does the evolution of predisposition to trust relationships occur in the process of studying and expanding interaction’ spheres in the education environment?

**3.4.** Does a positive interconnection between the teenagers’ trust evolution and their subjective wellbeing exist?

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

**4.1.** To identify personal preferences of the teenagers with regard to those specific personality traits, behavioural and moral characteristics that lay the foundation for trust in its different forms.

**4.2.** To define the impact of education environment, expansion of communication spheres, the respondents' growing up on their predisposition to trust relationship in different forms and at different levels.

**4.3.** To examine interrelations between different trust types of adolescents and their subjective wellbeing.

#### **5. Research Methods**

Personality orientation of the teenagers was examined using the standardized interview (40 questions) based on alternative choice method (L. Kolberg, M. Slavina, etc.) (Yegorycheva, 1999). Attitudes to trust relationships were defined through further elaboration of the questionnaire. Eight questions about the possibility and practicability of trust in other people and value priorities in trust relationships were added to I.D. Yegorycheva's 40 questions.

Modification of Dominant Teenager Personality Orientation Definition by I.D. Yegorycheva:

41. It is difficult to me to trust in adults.

42. It seems to me I have little credibility at school.

43. I am not in need for trust of others.

44. I am convinced that personality deserves trust of other people.

45. To my mind, trust of other people makes life easier and more interesting.

46. I consider mistrust in me to be imperfect understanding of my features.

47. When others begin to trust in me, then I can trust in them.

48. To achieve your life goals you can only trust in yourself, and trust in others can lead to failure.

The validity of the method used was tested through expert assessment of the results of the study into teenagers' attitude to self, others, the society, and trust relationships in inter-subject interaction. The respondents represented 215 teenagers aged 11-16 from Moscow and Yekaterinburg.

In order to define specific characteristics of personality who teenagers trust the survey was administered to 14-16-year-old schoolers (N=96) via semantic differential method (modified by D. Peabody, A.G. Shmelyov). The data processing was made using SPSS on the basis of descriptive statistic methods, confirmatory factor analysis.

In order to identify changes in teenagers' predisposition to trust' types, 48 interviews with second-year college students were conducted (2017). These students were also invited to answer questions for the survey in 2016. The survey questionnaire was built on characteristics of people these students could have their confidence in (according to the 2016 study results).

In order to examine interconnection between teenagers' subjective wellbeing (SWB) and forms of their trust relationships Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) was used. The subjects (95 teenagers) participated in the previous survey (SWLS) (Diner et al., 1985; Leontiev & Osin, 2011; SWLS. Encyclopedia of Psychodiagnostics) in a group setting. Three months later, the scale was re-administered to 77 of them. The indicator of retest validity (Pearson's Coefficient) obtained in the group of the

respondents three months apart was 0,70 ( $p < 0,001$ ). The mean score of the SWLS was 22,5, standard deviation = 6,2. Five statements were offered. Each of the statements was scored from 1 to 7 (from 5 = «very low average satisfaction» to 35 = «extremely high satisfaction»). Correlation coefficient of the retest survey results was 0,77.

The Satisfaction with life scale refers to short scales of the study into subjective wellbeing and shows the nature of perceptions about conditions and characteristics of the individual current life compared to his expectations. The resulting score acts as an indicator for evaluating positive cognitive correlation of real life circumstances with their ideal variant. The logic of further study implies the identification of interconnection between the level of subjective wellbeing estimated by the teenagers and their trust in “Others”. In order to define this cross-link our respondents were asked to assess interdependence of different forms of trust relationships with SWB level of the individuals.

## 6. Findings

The results of the study carried out revealed positive correlation between value-and-meaning-based orientation of the teenagers to personality and interests and stances of others in the group and predisposition to both self-trust and trust in others. Of 128 teenagers who had demonstrated positive attitude to friends, classmates, school, adults 105 highly assessed trust relationships with them (82 %).

Opposite orientation was demonstrated by the teenagers with critically negative orientation. Neither they themselves, nor people around them earn confidence (7,4%). Moreover, weakness in attempting to change the character of relationships with peers and adults was detected, which further decreases low self-esteem. The history of relationships with classmates and adults results in impossibility of trust in adults and other subjects of interaction (6,5%), impropriety of self-respect, which manifests itself in complicated emotional states requiring support and correction.

The data obtained with the help of semantic differential method allowed for shaping teenagers’ perceptions of personality features that the interaction’ subject who earns their trust at interpersonal level has. It is characteristic that the respondents indicated the essential role of personality traits which have formative influence on affect – based trust. Their trust relationships turn out well if the potential object of trust is cheerful, modest, tend to cooperate, organized, peaceful, tactful, pleasant (Perelygina, 2016, p. 323).

There are few personality features among characteristics forming the profile of teenagers’ trust relationships which can determine the evolvement of deterrence-based trust and calculus – based trust since the image of the subject of trust is peaceful, not aggressive; tactful, not tactless; sincere, not hypocritical; forgiving, not contentious; intelligent, not stupid; rather mild than tough.

The establishment of knowledge-based trust grounded on cognitive aspects of interaction, rapprochement of teenagers’ values and patterns of mutual understanding does not become mainstream one at this point of trust forms’ evolvement at this age. Preference is given to few features that could define the evolution of this form of trust: commitment to principle, self-discipline, and intellect. Specific features of the subjects of interaction with whom the establishment of identification-based trust can be traced are not indicated explicitly by the respondents.

The results of the study administered to 14-16-old teenagers demonstrated their perceptions of the individual who deserves different forms of trust and their preferences with respect to characteristics that determine, in the first place, affect-based trust and, to a certain extent, calculus – based trust.

The examination of predisposition to types of trust relationships conducted within a year of the previous survey found that the respondents demonstrated the growth of predisposition to deterrence-based trust, put more value on discipline, accuracy, prudence. Significance of emotional attractiveness of people with whom adolescents are willing to establish trust relationships remained at the same level. Practice of positive subject/subject interaction as well as the evolvement of friendly relationships with schoolers promoted knowledge-based trust. It is possible that shared sphere of interdependence, interactions on a regular basis and their quality contributed to the respondents' describing their relationship in terms of predictability, reliability and increased trust. Not by coincidence R. Hardin points that "trust is a third of relationship in the triangle A trusts in B regarding C" (Harwood, 2012, p. 30). The example of the author illustrating trust in the individual's knowledge of certain cognitive area completes the picture of trust evolution towards knowledge-based trust. The characteristic of reliability marked by the respondents is underlined by R. Hardin as integral to the concept of trust, and he treats it as equivalent to the theory of reliability (Hardin, 2006), which is in line with the position of our respondents.

Considering the logic of trust relationships W.T.Harwood points that, in general, perceptions of interpersonal trust are based on the standpoint that personality decision to trust is taken on cognitive and affective grounds (Harwood, 2012, p. 44). It is no mere chance that our young respondents consider identification – based trust only in the form of planning, and corresponding personal features which could provide the formation of this type of trust are not practically mentioned. The study conducted provided enough material to answer the question posed in Research Questions section about evolutionary changes in adolescents' predisposition to trust relationships.

The results of the survey on detecting interdependence of types of teenagers' trust relationships and their subjective wellbeing showed positive interconnection between different types of trust and SWB assessment; however, general trust in people has little correlation with SWB (30%). At that 80% percent of teenagers see the link between their subjective wellbeing and trust in family members, 72% believe that SWB is possible only in the event of trust in people the individual is familiar with. Answers to questions about the existence of interdependence of SWB with trust in different nationality representatives and different religion followers (according to World Values Survey) did not provide significant data. None of the teenagers indicated the link of satisfaction with his life in general with possibility of trust in people they had known before.

The respondents fix the impact of their trust relationships mainly with "close circle" of their subject-subject interaction partners on their subjective wellbeing. And the teenagers realize that diversity and the range of their SWB development is formed depending on whether their classmates, teachers, friends, parents and other subjects of trust relationships trust in them at different level of ontogenesis. It is of particular importance that knowledge– based trust possesses considerable weight in choosing grounds for teenagers' trust, which allows us to conclude about conscious, value-determined movement of young people to their subjective wellbeing.

## 7. Conclusion

Seeing trust relationships of teenagers as a factor of their subjective wellbeing we drew our focus toward the evolvement of adolescents' trust relationships and their personal orientation including their predisposition to trust relationships. The interdependence of interpersonal relations' forms and types of trust relationships from the perspective of the trust level evolution showed an essential role of positive expectations in subject-subject interaction, as well as teenagers' perceptions of personal features which their interaction partners earning their confidence should have. Different levels of trust involved mutual understanding at the level of goals, values, SWB parameters but they did not achieve the level of identification-based trust. The hypothesis of the existing positive interconnection between the development of teenagers trust and their subjective wellbeing proved to be partly correct as the teenagers saw the cross-link mentioned, in the first place, on the basis of trust in their family members, their friends and fellows, not on the basis of generalized trust. The challenge of increasing the young people' degree of satisfaction with life could be settled in its interdependence with the development of trust environment in the society, with the evolvement of trust in inclinations, ideas and opinions of "Others".

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