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Personality in Norm and in Pathology 2021**PECULIARITIES OF ATTITUDE TOWARDS TIME OF SMALL
BUSINESSES OWNERS**

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Abstract

Today, changes in the time of life in a digital society - time pressure illusion - are becoming more noticeable. Entrepreneurs as the most active social group, on the one hand, feel these changes brighter, and on the other hand, they are able to adapt to these changes better. Since there is a certain shortage of works studying psychological time of the entrepreneurs, the purpose of this paper is to identify the peculiarities of the attitudes towards the past, present and future of small businesses owners. The main technique used is J. Nuttin's Time Attitudes Scale. The psychological time of the entrepreneurs, especially the attitude to the past and the future, is a kind of holistic formation that characterizes this particular social group. Most positively in emotional terms, small business owners perceive the events of the past, a little less positively - the events of the present, and even less positively - the future events. This result is correlated with the data on the features of time perception in the modern information society, where the idea of progress (the future is better than the present, the present is better than the past) is no longer relevant. A positive attitude to own experience, the ability to "not fixate" on past failures increase personal resources for entrepreneurial activity. The optimistic image of the future associated with the implementation of plans, a sense of confidence in the control of events can also be considered a distinctive feature of entrepreneurial consciousness.

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1. Introduction

Entrepreneurs, as the most active social group sensitive to public sentiments, are perhaps the most affected as a result of changes in the timing of life in a digital society (the time pressure illusion). On the other hand, the internal temporal organization of a person involved in the entrepreneurial activity can define the features of his mindset and behavior, as well as act as a resource of entrepreneurial activity. From this point of view, the study of the attitude towards time among entrepreneurs who are representatives of small businesses seems to be highly relevant.

Each person has his own attitude towards the past, the present, and the future. This attitude is a fundamental and unconscious process that influences one's perception of life events (Bredun et al., 2018). A person's attitudes towards time at every moment are determined by the characteristics of the situation and individual preferences (Chuykova & Sotnikova, 2017), with the latter being relatively stable and dependent on cultural and social factors (Capitano & Greenhaus, 2018). We assumed that entrepreneurs, who have greater characteristics of personal responsibility, independence, risk-taking, and creativity, may have different attitudes towards time than people who work for hire. Moreover, it is likely that the entrepreneurs' location (the center of the country or the periphery) will also influence these attitudes.

2. Problem Statement

There is a lack of studies devoted to the subjective (psychological) time of entrepreneurs (Chandra, 2017; Chen & Nadkarni, 2017; Przepiorka, 2017). Researchers are only trying to address the question of how the entrepreneur perceives time, how he treats it, what mental and behavioral patterns exist among entrepreneurs in relation towards time compared to hired employees. For example, there is a study on the perceptions of winemakers (small business owners) about different types of time: time of nature, economic time, and human time (Barthod-Prothade et al., 2016). This example concludes that winemakers' ability to be aware of all these types of time is their distinctive, specific competency (Barthod-Prothade et al., 2016).

The greatest amount of studies are devoted to the perspective of the future among entrepreneurs (Przepiorka, 2017). However, there is still no consensus on this subject. For example, there is a common view that both aspiring and already successful entrepreneurs are highly future-oriented (Przepiorka, 2016; Retsikas, 2017). However, a previous study (the late 1970s) of businessmen (aged from 35 to 64), on the other hand, found that they had a shortened time horizon (LeBlanc, 1969), which was explained by the nature of professional activities associated with uncertain economic risk (LeBlanc, 1969).

Some studies show that in order to improve the efficiency of entrepreneurial activity it is necessary to be focused both on the future and the present. For example, Shipp et al. (2009) highlight the importance of a temporal focus on the present and the future when it comes to making decisions with delayed economic consequences (Das & Teng, 1997).

This research examines such an aspect of the psychological time of entrepreneurs, as the emotional attitudes towards their past, present, and future. Nuttin's (2004) concept distinguishes between time perspective, time orientation, and time attitudes (attitudes towards time). According to his perspective, attitudes towards time reflect a set of feelings that a person has about a certain period of life (Nuttin,

2004). Since the notion of time is a social construct, attitudes towards the past, the present, and the future may reflect a person's attitudes and values.

3. Research Questions

1. How do entrepreneurs who own small businesses emotionally perceive past, present, and future events?
2. What are the peculiarities of entrepreneurs' attitudes towards the past, the present, and the future as compared to those of employees?
3. Are there any differences in entrepreneurs' attitudes towards time in the center of the country and the periphery? If yes, what are the causes of these differences?

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to identify and interpret the characteristics of the attitude towards the past, present, and future among entrepreneurs who are representatives of small businesses.

5. Research Methods

The methodology of the "Time Attitude Scale" developed by Nuttin (2004) allows us to identify attitudes towards the future, the present, and the past. Developed in Belgium, the methodology was adapted to the Russian sample in 2000 by Muzdybayev (2000), and it is actively used by Russian researchers. The methodology is based on C. Osgood's principle of semantic differential and represents bipolar pairs of adjectives, where one axis has a positive attitude, and on the other axis is the opposite, negative attitude. Respondents are asked to define their attitude towards time (the past, the present, and the future) based on 15 parameters (pairs of bipolar adjectives), which include emotional attitude, values-based attitude, and personality-based control of time: 1. Pleasant – Unpleasant; 2. Eventful – Eventless; 3. Safe – Scary; 4. Beautiful – Horrible; 5. Hopeful – Hopeless; 6. Fast-paced – Slow-paced; 7. Easy – Hard; 8. Successful – Unsuccessful; 9. Interesting – Boring; 10. Significant – Insignificant; 11. Bright – Dark; 12. Free – Captive; 13. Meaningful – Meaningless; 14. Active – Passive; 15. Familiar – Unfamiliar. A 7-point scale was chosen to assess attitudes toward the past, the present, and the future, where the positive axis is indicated by 1 point and the negative axis by 7 points (a neutral position is indicated by 4 points).

A total of 388 respondents took part in the research. The main group consisted of 109 representatives of small businesses in different spheres of activities (wholesale and retail trade, education, tourism, consulting, manufacturing, etc.), registered in the Chelyabinsk Region and operating in the Russian Federation. This group was created randomly and included respondents aged from 24 to 68 years (average age 34.9), 42% of whom are men. Apart from the group of entrepreneurs, three control groups took part in the research. The first two groups are represented by hired workers – secondary school teachers (N=148), and civil servants (N=92). The third group for comparison was made up of entrepreneurs – representatives of small businesses from St. Petersburg (N = 39).

6. Findings

To answer the first research question, we compared integral indicators of attitudes toward the past, the present, and the future among entrepreneurs by using Wilcoxon's signed-rank test. We found the following pattern: owners of small businesses perceive the events of the past most positively in emotional terms, slightly less positively – the events of the present, and even less positively – the events of the future ($p=0.001$). This result correlates with the existing findings on the peculiarities of the perception of time in today's information society, where the idea of progress (the future is better than the present, the present is better than the past) no longer works (Weisman, 2019). On the other hand, all scores on the 7-point scale are expressed at a relatively high level, which may indicate an optimistic attitude of entrepreneurs to the time of life. In order to verify this result, we address the second research question.

The Mann-Whitney U-test comparison revealed significant differences in attitudes towards the past, the present, and the future among entrepreneurs and school teachers.

Entrepreneurs perceive the past as more eventful ($p=0.023$), beautiful ($p=0.37$), significant ($p=0.12$), interesting ($p=0.004$), bright ($p=0.023$), active ($p=0.009$) and familiar ($p=0.007$).

The present is viewed by both teachers and entrepreneurs as safe, difficult, and fast-paced. The other scales showed significant differences. In comparison with teachers, owners of small businesses perceive the present as more pleasant ($p=0.002$), eventful ($p=0.003$), beautiful ($p=0.004$), hopeful ($p=0.001$), successful ($p=0.000$), interesting ($p=0.000$), significant ($p=0.002$), bright ($p=0.000$), free ($p=0.001$), meaningful ($p=0.008$), active ($p=0.000$), familiar ($p=0.001$). We can assume that entrepreneurs have a more positive perception of events that happen to them, and they see more meaning in them, as well as feel a greater sense of control over the events of their lives compared to secondary school teachers.

Attitudes towards the future among entrepreneurs in comparison with teachers are significantly different in all measured parameters, except for one - fast-paced. Entrepreneurs perceive the future as more pleasant ($p=0.000$), eventful ($p=0.000$), safe ($p=0.017$), beautiful ($p=0.000$), hopeful ($p=0.001$), easy ($p=0.003$), successful ($p=0.000$), interesting ($p=0.000$), significant ($p=0.000$), bright ($p=0.000$), free ($p=0.003$), meaningful ($p=0.001$), active ($p=0.000$), familiar ($p=0.000$). We can conclude that owners of small businesses are more optimistic about the future than secondary school teachers, and they are more likely to associate the future with the realization of important plans, they see more opportunities in it and are more confident that they can manage it.

After that, we compared the attitudes towards time among entrepreneurs and civil servants. As in the comparison with the previous group, we found quite a few significant differences, especially concerning the present and the future. We found only one significant difference in attitudes towards the past in the parameter "interesting - boring". Entrepreneurs rate past events as more interesting ($p=0.021$) in comparison to civil servants.

Small business owners perceive the present more positively than civil servants as it is more pleasant ($p=0.022$), beautiful ($p=0.036$), hopeful ($p=0.012$), successful ($p=0.004$), interesting ($p=0.002$), bright ($p=0.001$), free ($p=0.001$), active ($p=0.013$), familiar ($p=0.03$).

In both groups, the future is perceived as hopeful, fairly easy, and meaningful, but attitudes towards the future are significantly different in all other parameters. Entrepreneurs perceive the future as more pleasant ($p=0.048$), eventful ($p=0.001$), safe ($p=0.05$), beautiful ($p=0.008$), fast-paced ($p=0.28$),

successful ($p=0.007$), interesting ($p=0.001$), significant ($p=0.017$), bright ($p=0.018$), active ($p=0.004$), familiar ($p=0.034$). Just as in the case of teachers, in comparison to civil servants, small business owners are also more optimistic about the future, see more opportunities, and are more confident in their ability to control future events.

To answer the third research question, we compared the attitude towards time among the entrepreneurs of Chelyabinsk and St. Petersburg. The comparative analysis revealed no differences in attitudes towards the past and the future, and there were relatively few differences in attitudes towards the present. This result allows us to say that the psychological time of entrepreneurs, and particularly the attitude towards the past and the future, is a kind of a coherent characteristic of this social group. We can assume that a positive attitude towards one's experiences, the ability not to dwell on past failures unleashes personal resources for entrepreneurial activity. A positive image of the future, associated with the implementation of plans, a sense of confidence of being in control of events can also be considered a distinctive feature of entrepreneurial thinking.

Overall, entrepreneurs from Chelyabinsk are slightly more optimistic about the events of the present than their counterparts from St. Petersburg. They subjectively perceive the present as more beautiful ($p=0.018$), easy ($p=0.032$), successful ($p=0.001$), free ($p=0.001$), active ($p=0.001$).

7. Conclusion

In summary, we can draw the main conclusions from the results of the study. Psychological time of entrepreneurs, and particularly the attitude towards the past and the future, is, in fact, a kind of a coherent characteristic of this social group. A positive attitude towards one's experiences, the ability not to dwell on past failures unleashes personal resources for entrepreneurial activity. A positive image of the future, associated with the implementation of plans, a sense of confidence of being in control of events can also be considered a distinctive feature of entrepreneurial thinking.

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