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MANIFESTATION OF OPTIMISM AMONG MIDDLE-AGED PEOPLE IN THE CONTEXT OF PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING

Анотація. Викладено результати емпіричного дослідження особливостей взаємозв'язку між оптимізмом та психологічним благополуччям в осіб зрілого віку. Встановлено, що досліджувані з високими показниками самоефективності, диспозиційного оптимізму та оптимізму як стилю атрибуції мають найвищі показники психологічного благополуччя; досліджувані, які схильні використовувати нереалістичний оптимізм як захисний механізм, мають більш високі показники соціальної бажаності та характеризуються більш низькими показниками психологічного благополуччя та самоефективності.

Ключові слова: оптимізм, песимізм, самоефективність, психологічне благополуччя, соціальна бажаність, зріла особистість.

Аннотация. В статье представлены результаты эмпирического исследования характера взаимосвязи оптимизма и психологического благополучия у людей зрелого возраста. Установлено, что у испытуемых с высокими показателями самоэффективности, диспозиционного оптимизма и оптимизма как стиля атрибуции наблюдаются высокие показатели психологического благополучия; испытуемые, которые склонны использовать нереалистичный оптимизм как защитный механизм, имеют более высокие показатели социальной желательности и характеризуются более низкими показателями психологического благополучия и самоэффективности личности.

Ключевые слова: оптимизм, пессимизм, самоэффективность, психологическое благополучие, социальная желательность, зрелая личность.

Problem identification. At present, psychology of optimism is a branch of scientific knowledge, which is developing intensively both in theoretical and practical aspects. The modern psychologists, due to the rapid development of positive psychology, pay much attention to the "training" of optimism and the positive thinking of the individual. Today the relationship of psychological well-being with the different personality characteristics (the prognostic competence, life purport orientations, emotional intelligence, life strategies, etc.) is also studying actively, the problems of the origin and development of psychological well-being in different age periods are examining actively, the valid and reliable tools for measuring this phenomenon is developing, the refinement and operationalization of this construct is taking place.

We assume that the problem of the relationship between optimism and psychological well-being of the aged persons is worthy to be examined with the special attention, because this age period contains two crises at once – 30 and 40 years (the mid-life crisis). The man under 30 has a model-dream of the lifestyle, during the crisis begins he starts to fix attention on the differences between the ideal model and the reality, comes across with a sense of the loss of life and the

pressure of time, the personal and meaningful alteration, the correction of the life plans and the manner of their lives occur in the postcritical phase.

The modern world is rather unstable, a person needs to adapt constantly to the certain life circumstances. The pessimists often expect the troubles, and this is a significant stressgenetic factor, especially in the conditions of the difficult working hours. As it's known, it is easier for the optimist to adapt to the changes, he can cope with difficulties more easily; optimism helps to overcome the feeling of emptiness, which is very important for the adult age individual. However, modern researchers point out the unconditional benefits of the positive thinking; there are convincing evidences of the certain "benefits" of pessimism as the attributive style of personality, "protective pessimism".

The theoretical and methodological basis of the study consists of the works of the scientists who researched the phenomenon of psychological well-being, in particular: the question of positive individual psychological functioning (Ryff, 1989), the psychophysiological preservation of functions (Ryan & Disi, 2009) and also as a holistic experience, expressed in the subjective sense of happiness (Shevelenkova, Fesenko, 2013); the problem of psychological well-being in the researches of the domestic scientists (Arshava, 2012; Nosenko, 2013; Shamionov, 2008); the works of the scientists who studied the phenomenon of psychological well-being in the hedonistic (Bradburn, 2012) and the eudemontistic directions (Sozontov, 2006); the research of the studied helplessness and optimism (Seligman, 2002); the theoretical information regarding optimism as a component of the problem of achievement motivation (Vindeker, 2009; Gordeyeva, 2011), as the key component in the protection of personality from distress and as the significant factor in the prediction of subjective well-being (Perova, 2009), as the personal disposition (Muzdibayev, 2003) and the disposition, which includes an explanatory style; the understanding of the phenomena of optimism and pessimism in the history of science and philosophy (Plato, L. Seneca, G. Leibniz, L. Tiger, M. Heidegger, A. Schopenhauer); the study of dispositive optimism (Sychev, 2008) and optimism as an attributive style (Seligman, 2002); the theoretical information regarding the phenomenon of protective pessimism (Norem & Chang, 2002); the theory of the social learning and self-efficacy (A. Bandura).

The objective of the present study is to explore the features of optimism manifestation as a component of psychological well-being of an adult person from the theoretical and empirical points of view.

On the basis of the theoretical analysis of the problem, the conceptual hypothesis of the study was formulated: there is a certain correlation between optimism of the mature age personality and his psychological well-being.

The conceptual hypothesis is specified in the following empirical hypotheses: 1) the higher is the level of dispositive optimism of the individual, the higher are the indicators of his psychological well-being; 2) the higher are indicators of optimism of the personality in the explanations the favorable and adverse events, the higher are indicators of his psychological well-being; 3) the high indicators of psychological well-being are accompanied by the high indicators of dispositive optimism and optimism as a style of attribution, however, the individuals with the

high level of optimism can be characterized by both the high and low indicators of psychological well-being; 4) those who are inclined to demonstrate the high level of social desirability and the high level of optimism are characterized by lower psychological well-being and self-efficacy than those who have the low level of social desirability and the high level of optimism; 5) those who are inclined to use unrealistic optimism as a protective mechanism, have the higher indicators of social desirability and are characterized by the lower indicators of psychological well-being and self-efficacy of the individual.

The **empirical study** was attended by 80 people (38 females, 42 males), aged from 30 to 60 years.

In the course of the study, a set of **methods** was used: testing, conversation, correlation study, quasi-experiment with comparison of the non-equivalents groups. Applied psychodiagnostic techniques: 1) "Level of optimism-pessimism" by M. Seligman (1991); 2) Dispositional optimism test by Charles Carver (adapted by T. Gordeyeva, E. Osin, O. Sychev, 2012); 3) the Ryff Scales of Psychological Well-being (adapted by M. M. Lepeshynskiy, 2007); 4) Thematic apperception test (TAT) by G. Murray (1943); 5) "Scale of general self-efficacy" by M. Jerusalem and R. Schwartz (adapted by V. Romek, 1996); 6) "Scale of social desirability" by D. Kraune and D. Marlow (1960).

Mathematical-statistical methods: correlation analysis (the r-linear Pearson correlation coefficient), the determination of the statistical significance of differences between the groups (the Mann-Whitney U test), two-factor dispersion analysis (MANOVA).

The **results of the calculations** of the correlation coefficients between the indicators of dispositive optimism and psychological well-being are shown in Table 1.

Table 1

The relationship between dispositive optimism and psychological well-being

Scales	Dispositive optimism
Positive relationship	0,494 **
Ecological mastery	0,492**
Autonomy	0,404**
Personal growth	0,558**
Goals in life	0,564**
Self-acceptance	0,486**
Psychological well-being	0,593**

Note. ** – statistically significant on the level of $p \leq 0,01$

Thus, we can state the confirmation of the first empirical hypothesis - the higher is the level of dispositive optimism of the individual, the higher are the indicators of his psychological well-being.

The results of correlation analysis of the relationship between psychological well-being and optimism as an attribution style are given in Table 2.

Table 2

The relationship between psychological well-being and optimism as an attribution style

Scales	Summary of adverse events	Summary of favorable events
Positive relationship	-0,098	0,256*
Ecological mastery	-0,260*	0,420**
Autonomy	-0,115	0,340**
Personal growth	-0,176	0,494**
Goals in life	-0,231*	0,447**
Self-acceptance	-0,206	0,430**
Psychological well-being	-0,216	0,494**

Note. * – statistically significant on the level of $p \leq 0,05$

** – statistically significant on the level of $p \leq 0,01$

Thus, the second hypothesis was partly confirmed. The higher are the indicators of optimism in explaining the favorable events, the higher are the indicators of his psychological well-being. With regard to the high pessimism indicators in explaining the adverse events, the inverse correlation with indicators of ecological mastery and goals in life is observed.

The results obtained by us are partially reflected in the research work of the relationship between the attributive style, well-being and the academic achievement of T. Gordeeva and E. Osin according to their two studies; the scientists have concluded that the moderately pessimistic explanation of the negative events could cause the anxiety and motivate a person for the persistent achievement and the deep concentration for short-term goals, but could lead to the depression and passivity in the event where goals were long-term. In its turn, the optimistic explanation of the positive events motivates the person to act, to achieve the long-term goals persistently and to overcome the difficulties arising on the way effectively. However, when the individual faces with a new and complex activity, it can lead to the unrealistic expectation of success (Gordeeva & Osin, 2011).

To test the third empirical hypothesis that the high indicators of psychological well-being are accompanied by the high indicators of dispositive optimism and optimism as a style of attribution, however, the individuals with a high level of optimism can be characterized both high and low indicators of psychological well-being, we applied the procedure of two-factor dispersion analysis (MANOVA). The indicator of psychological well-being was used as the dependent variable. The indicators of dispositive optimism of a personality and social desirability were considered as the independent variables.

The subjects were divided into six groups. The first group included 6 persons with the low levels of optimism (0-9 points) and social desirability (0-6 points). The second group included participants with the low level of optimism and averages indicators of social desirability (7-12 points) (5 subjects). The third group consisted of testees with the low level of optimism and the high level of social desirability (13-20 points) (23 persons). To the fourth group, the subjects with the high levels of optimism (9-16 points) and the low social desirability were included (14 subjects). The fifth group (19 people) is characterized by the high level of

optimism and the average indicators of social desirability, the sixth group is characterized by the high level of optimism and the high indicators of social desirability (13 subjects).

In the isolated groups of the subjects the differences between the indicators of psychological well-being were analyzed. Table 3 presents the averaged indicators of psychological well-being in the isolated study groups.

Table 3

Averaged indicators of psychological well-being of the subjects with the different indicators of optimism and social desirability

Social desirability	Dispositional optimism	
	Low level	High level
Low level	331,50	389,93
Average level	339,00	367,00
High level	276,96	324,46

Two-factor dispersion analysis conducted to determine the influence of the factors of optimism as the dispositional features of personality and social desirability on the level of psychological well-being allowed to establish the following results (Table 4).

Table 4

The results of two-factor dispersion analysis of the influence of optimism and social desirability factors on psychological well-being of the individual

Influence of factors	F	p	Conclusions
Optimism	10,229	0,002	significant influence ($p < 0,01$)
Social desirability	9,227	0,000	significant influence ($p < 0,01$)
Interaction of factors	0,342	0,712	insignificant influence ($p > 0,05$)

The empirical value of F indicating the influence of the optimism factor on well-being, reaches the level of the statistical significance ($p = 0.002$). Also the statistically significant influence of the social desirability factor ($p = 0.000$) on well-being of the person is revealed, the interaction of the factors is not set at the statistically significant level (Fig. 1).

As can be seen from the figure, the subjects with the high level of optimism show the higher rates on the scale of psychological well-being, providing the low and average levels of social desirability. These results suggest in favor of our assumption that the subjects with marked optimism can be characterized by both high and low values of psychological well-being. Only in the case if optimism is accompanied by the unexpressed indicators of social desirability, the person can demonstrate the relatively high level of psychological well-being. The examination of the following assumption allows us to study this aspect of the problem in more detail.

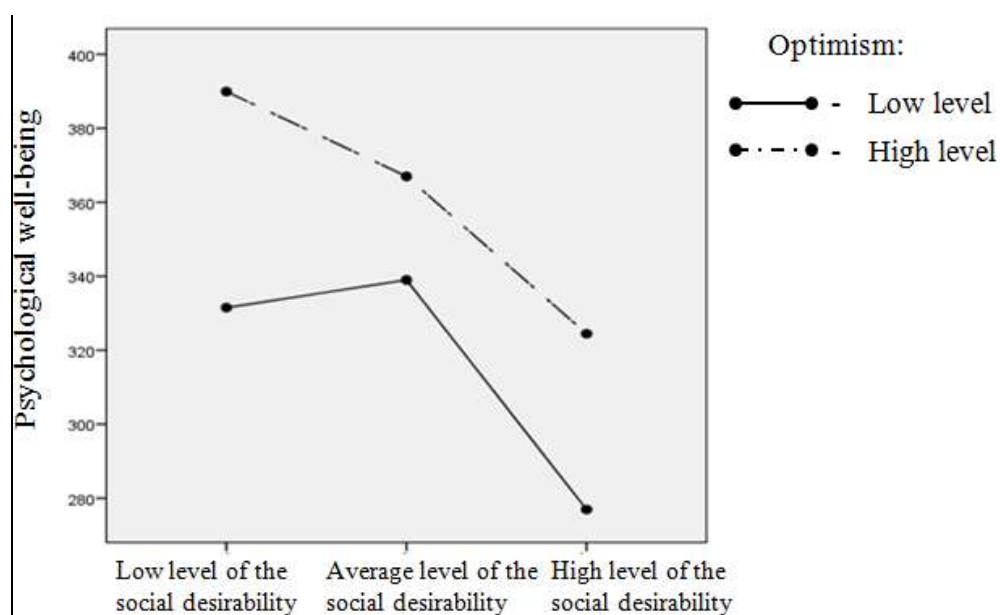


Fig. 1. Significance of the indicators of psychological well-being of the subjects with different levels of optimism and social desirability

To test the fourth empirical hypothesis that those who are inclined to demonstrate the high level of social desirability and the high level of optimism are characterized by lower psychological well-being and self-efficacy in comparison with those who have the low level of social desirability and the high level of optimism, the empirical sample was divided into two groups, depending on the indicators of optimism and social desirability. In the first group, the subjects with the high level of optimism, according to M. Seligman's method, were above the average on the sample, who simultaneously demonstrated the higher rates on the test of "Social Desire" ($n=18$). In the second group, the subjects with the lower rates of optimism and indicators of social desirability below the average level were included ($n=24$).

In the isolated groups, the average indicators on the scales of psychological well-being and self-efficacy were analyzed and the statistical significance of the differences according to the Mann-Whitney U test was established (Table 5).

According to the analysis provided in Table 5, we have found that there are significant differences between 2 groups in almost all items according to the "Scale of psychological well-being" method except "Positive relationship" and "Personal growth"; the subjects with relatively high levels of optimism and social desirability exhibits the lower rates. Thus, the obtained results are in agreement with the declared hypothesis.

To test the last - fifth empirical hypothesis that those who are inclined to use unrealistic optimism as a protective mechanism, have the higher indicators of social desirability and are characterized by the lower indicators of psychological well-being and self-efficacy, we used the data obtained through the Thematic Apperception Test. To determine expectation of optimism of the testees using the TAT method, we used the indicator of the optimistic narrative on the neutral tables of the methodology (Sychev, 2008).

Table 5

Averaged indicators of psychological well-being and self-efficacy of subjects with the different levels of optimism and social desirability (using the Mann-Whitney U test)

Indicators of psychological well-being and self-efficacy	Groups studied		p
	Relatively high level of optimism and social desirability (18 people)	Relatively high level of optimism and low level of social desirability (24 people)	
Self-efficacy	25,44	32,08	p = 0,004
Positive relationship	53,83	61,88	p = 0,067
Ecological mastery	50,61	62,79	p = 0,001
Autonomy	51,50	63,25	p = 0,004
Personal growth	57,28	61,42	p = 0,268
Goals in life	56,22	66,00	p = 0,011
Self-acceptance	51,89	66,00	p = 0,003
Psychological well-being	320,61	386,00	p = 0,001

To define if this indicator corresponds to the results of optimism diagnostic questionnaires, we calculated the coefficient of correlation r-Pearson between the indexes of Disposition optimism test by C. Carver, the method of M. Seligman "Level of optimism-pessimism" for the diagnosis of optimism as an attribution style and the indicators of optimism of the studied stories on the neutral TAT tables (Table 6).

Table 6

The significance of the r-Pearson correlation coefficient between the optimism indicators (questionnaires by C. Carver, M. Seligman) and the optimistic stories of the subjects studied on the neutral TAT tables

Indicators of optimism by questionnaires	Indicator of optimistic stories on the neutral TAT tables
Indicator of dispositive optimism	0,232*
Indicator of optimism as an attribution style	0,089

Note. * – statistically significant on the level of $p \leq 0,05$

As we see from Table 6, the results of the determination of the personality optimism on the basis of the TAT technique positively correlate ($p < 0,05$) with the index of dispositive optimism by C. Carver's method, the correlation coefficient between optimism of the stories studied on the neutral TAT tables and the indicators of optimism due to the test "Level of optimism-pessimism" by M. Seligman, unfortunately, does not reach statistically significant level. This result allows us to assume the possibility of obtaining the valid and reliable results of the diagnosis of optimism on the basis of the application of the projective technique TAT.

To identify the subjects who are tend to use the unrealistic optimism as a protective mechanism, we used the indicator of the optimistic stories on the table with the negative content of the TAT method (Sychev, 2008). In the group of the examined people using unrealistic optimism, there were 5 people (3 men and 2

women) who produced only the optimistic stories on the all proposed negative-content pictures. Having divided the subjects, we counted the average indicators on the scales of psychological well-being, self-efficacy and social desirability in the group using unrealistic optimism and in the group with testees who are not inclined to deny reality. The results of calculations are presented in Table 7.

Table 7

Averaged indicators of psychological well-being, self-efficacy and social desirability in the groups with/without a tendency to use unrealistic optimism (using the Mann-Whitney U test)

Scales	Groups studied		p
	Applying of unrealistic optimism (5 people)	Without the use of unrealistic optimism (75 people)	
Positive relationship	51,20	56,89	p = 0,189
Ecological mastery	38,40	54,64	p = 0,080
Autonomy	42,40	54,65	p = 0,044
Personal growth	48,20	57,77	p = 0,003
Goals in life	41,80	58,29	p = 0,003
Self- acceptance	31,60	56,23	p = 0,001
Psychological well-being	253,60	339,15	p = 0,004
Self-efficacy	19,20	26,40	p = 0,052
Social desirability	12,60	10,71	p = 0,511

All the indicators of psychological well-being in the group with a tendency to use unrealistic optimism are lower than in the other group. The discrepancies achieve statistically significant level in the indicators of autonomy, personal growth, goals in life, self- acceptance and psychological well-being. Differences in the indicators of self-efficacy and social desirability do not reach the level of the statistical significance, but the significance of the difference in the indicators of self-efficacy $p=0,052$ can be considered as the tendency that testees incline to use unrealistic optimism are characterized by the lower level of self-efficacy, and they also show the higher rate of social desirability. Consequently, on the basis of the statistical analysis, we can conclude that our empirical hypothesis regarding the decline of well-being with unrealistic optimism is confirmed.

Conclusion. The established links between optimism and psychological well-being components confirm the theoretical information about optimism and pessimism as the independent psychological characteristics of the individual, which in its turn, take part in the experience of the personality of psychological well-being.

Since our study revealed a close relationship between well-being and indicators of not only optimism but also pessimism, the further study of this issue can be more deeper research of the nature of this connection. In addition, it's important to stress that the development of the system of psychocorrective measures to promote the increase of the level of psychological well-being through the elaboration of its main components is the actual direction of the further

development of the topic. It is worth paying attention to the more detailed study of such phenomena as "protective pessimism" and "unrealistic optimism". Future scientific developments can be carried out in the framework of the experimental study, its results will show the peculiarities of psychological well-being of the individual in different age periods and the impact of the indicators of optimism and pessimism on it.

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ДОСЛІДЖЕННЯ ІНТЕРПРЕТАЦІЙНОЇ ДІЯЛЬНОСТІ ОСОБИСТОСТІ У ВІЦІ РАННЬОЇ ДОРОСЛОСТІ

Анотація. В статті представлено обґрунтування методичного підходу дослідження інтерпретаційної діяльності особистості із застосуванням задач на інтерпретацію, а також викладено результати емпіричного дослідження. Виявлено високий рівень вмотивованості на рішення інтерпретаційної задачі осіб віку ранньої дорослості. Встановлено в цілому недостатній рівень усвідомлення інтерпретаційної задачі, відсутність сформованості окремих інтерпретаційних дій, низький рівень рефлексії інтерпретаційної діяльності.

Ключові слова: інтерпретація, задача на інтерпретацію, особистість, суб'єкт інтерпретаційної діяльності.

Аннотация. Статья отражает подход к исследованию интерпретационной деятельности личности путем решения задач на интерпретацию. В результате проведения эмпирического исследования на основе данного подхода у испытуемых раннего взрослого возраста выявлен высокий уровень мотивированности к решению задач на интерпретацию. Интерпретационная деятельность испытуемых в целом характеризуется невысоким уровнем осознанности, отсутствием сформированности отдельных интерпретационных действий, а также низким уровнем рефлексии.

Ключевые слова: интерпретация, задача на интерпретацию, личность, субъект интерпретации.

Постановка проблеми у загальному вигляді та її зв'язок із важливими науковими чи практичними завданнями. Однією з найважливіших проблем вивчення інтерпретаційної діяльності особистості є проблема методів її дослідження, оскільки інтерпретація ґрунтується на суб'єктивних уявленнях, оцінках, досвіді, індивідуально-психологічних властивостях особистості. Суб'єктивність інтерпретації виявляється у зв'язку з оцінкою того, що пізнається, та виробленням особистістю певного ставлення до цього. Як ключова характеристика суб'єктивності інтерпретації проявляється у здійсненні довільно обраних особистістю дій у процесі інтерпретування. Суб'єкт може відкидати те, що йому неприйнятно, абстрагуватися від певних, навіть суттєвих обставин, фактів, формулювати їх ієрархію, послідовність, створювати свою композицію смислового простору. Оскільки особистість здійснює інтерпретацію власно для себе з метою досягнення визначеності, в оцінці її якості не можна використати критерій істинності-невірності. Однак і у життєвій практиці людей, і у практиці.

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Manifestation of optimism among middle – aged people in the context of psychological well-being

Background. Optimism and pessimism are important psychological constructs, closely related to such concepts as motivation of achievement, perseverance, stress, depression, psychological well-being, hope, etc. The period of mature age is the time of the mid-life crisis. Some contemporary psychologists investigate optimism as a dispositional personality trait and as an attributive style. Special attention should be focused on the study of unrealistic optimism and protective pessimism.

The objective of the present study is to explore the features of optimism manifestation as a component of psychological well-being of an adult person from the theoretical and empirical points of view.

Method. "Level of optimism-pessimism" by M. Seligman (1991); Dispositional optimism test by Charles Carver (adapted by T. Gordeyeva, E. Osin, O. Sychev, 2012); the Ryff Scales of Psychological Well-being (adapted by M. M. Lepeshynskiy, 2007); Thematic apperception test (TAT) by G. Murray (1943); "Scale of general self-efficacy" by M. Jerusalem and R. Schwartz (adapted by V. Romek, 1996); "Scale of social desirability" by D. Kraune and D. Marlow (1960).

A quasi-experimental plan for nonequivalent groups was chosen. The **sample** included 80 participants (38 females, 42 males), aged from 30 to 60.

Mathematical-statistical methods: correlation analysis (the r-linear Pearson correlation coefficient), the determination of the statistical significance of differences between the groups (the Mann-Whitney U test), two-factor dispersion analysis (MANOVA).

Results. The research results have shown that the high indicators of psychological well-being are accompanied by the high indicators of dispositive optimism and optimism as a style of attribution. However, the individuals with the high level of optimism demonstrated both the high and low indicators of psychological well-being; those who are inclined to demonstrate the high levels of social desirability and the high levels of optimism are characterized by the lower psychological well-being and self-efficacy than those who have the low levels of social desirability and the high levels of optimism; the subjects who are inclined to use unrealistic optimism as a protective mechanism, have the higher indicators of social desirability and are characterized by the lower indicators of psychological well-being and self-efficacy.

Conclusions. The correlations between optimism and psychological well-being components confirm the theoretical information about optimism and pessimism as the independent psychological characteristics of the individual, which in its turn, take part in the experience of the personality of psychological well-being.

Keywords: optimism, pessimism, self-efficacy, psychological well-being, social desirability, mature personality.