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## **ACHIEVEMENT OF EXISTENTIAL FULLNESS IN PREADULT AGE AS A CONDITION OF OVERCOMING AGE-RELATED INTERNAL PERSONALITY CONFLICT**

The article discusses the problem of identity in the process of formation in the preadult age. The trends of development of an adequate identity are determined. The notion of existential fullness and its place in the personal consciousness of senses and values is defined. Also, the results of experimental study of the level of existential fullness among the students of preadult age are described.

*Keywords:* preadult age, identity, existence, life sense and values, scale of existence.

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### **НАБУТТЯ ВИПОВНЕНОЇ ЕКЗИСТЕНЦІЇ У ЮНАЦЬКОМУ ВІЦІ ЯК УМОВА ПОДОЛАННЯ ВІКОВОГО ВНУТРІШНЬОГО КОНФЛІКТУ ОСОБИСТОСТІ**

У статті розглянуто проблему ідентичності, яка перебуває у стані формування у юнацькому віці. Визначено напрямки, за якими розвивається адекватна ідентичність. Надано поняття виповненої екзистенції та її місця в усвідомленні людиною сенсів та цінностей. Також описано результати експериментального вивчення рівня екзистенційної виповненості у студентів юнацького віку.

*Ключові слова:* юнацький вік, ідентичність, екзистенція, сенс життя та цінності, шкала екзистенції.

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### **ПРИОБРЕТЕНИЕ ИСПОЛНЕННОЙ ЭКЗИСТЕНЦИИ В ЮНОШЕСКОМ ВОЗРАСТЕ КАК УСЛОВИЕ ПРЕОДОЛЕНИЯ ВОЗРАСТНОГО ВНУТРЕННЕГО КОНФЛИКТА ЛИЧНОСТИ**

В статье рассматривается проблема идентичности, которая находится в состоянии формирования в юношеском возрасте. Определены направления, по которым развивается адекватная идентичность. Предложено понятие исполненной экзистенции ее места в осознании человеком смыслов и ценностей. Также описаны результаты экспериментального изучения уровня экзистенциальной исполненности в юношеском возрасте.

*Ключевые слова:* юношеский возраст, идентичность, экзистенция, смысл жизни и ценности, шкала экзистенции.

**Introduction.** A large number of items of scientific literature dedicated to the research of the issue of the sense of life is currently available. This problem has been previously considered as an issue of existential philosophy; however, it has been also attracting the attention of psychologists for a long time. Formation of life senses takes place in the process of life of a personality and reflects in the so-called existential sphere of personal mentality. The existential sphere is characterized by the ability of an individual to control his or her physical and psychic states, holding them at an adequate level, harmony of feelings and actions, word and deed. This sphere helps a person communicating with other individuals in various ways (love or hate, compete or cooperate, etc.). Orientations, under the influence of which an individual enters into relationship with the surrounding world, define the essences of his existential sphere. It is this sphere that performs the function of selection of ideas and value orientations [1; 5].

Actuality of the present research is determined by the arising of modern day demands to a personality. It is getting harder for a person to find answers for such questions as “Who am I in this life?”, “Who are the other persons?”, “How to make decisions in life and who is responsible for them?”, “What should I do next?” Author of the epigenetic theory of personality development E. Ericsson believes that it corresponds to the tasks of the preadult age, which is accompanied by the “crisis of identity” – formation of personal identity, sense of individual self-identification, continuity and unity. He uses the word “crisis” in the context of notions of personality development in order to mark out the moment of changing, rather than a threat of disaster, to underline the critical period of increased vulnerability of growing potencies, and, consequently, the ontogenetic source of possible formation of adequate or inadequate adaptation [7]. Crises of age development reflect in internal conflicts of a young personality. Internal personality conflict is a psychological state caused by the clash or opposition of various demands, values, interests, attractions, views, etc., taking place in the internal context. In modern psychology the conflicts are considered as an attribute of mental life of a person, its necessary component, which can have, at certain conditions, both destructive and constructive consequences. The preadult age can be characterized by the escalation of internal conflicts which have not been solved at previous stages of age psychological development and their settlement promotes the personality growth [4]. The experience gained and the conclusions made by a young person in this period of his life will influence his further formation as a personality, his internal world, values and senses. M. Balushok has shown the differences in the emotional

experience of the inner conflicts in groups of people with different levels of hardiness [1]. Ya.G. Grigorieva considers that the important factors of formation of life sense are freedom and responsibility. According to V. Frankl, a person starts behaving like a personality only when he is able to overcome the level of “psychophysical-organismic” entity and to treat himself, not necessarily opposing oneself. This possibility is the existence, and to exist means to constantly extend beyond the boundaries of oneself [6, p. 93]. Existence, coming from the Latin word “existere”, means a real life, full depth of feelings, realized undertakings, own decisions, even wrong ones, in general – a sometimes hard, but good life. If a person has a feeling of satisfaction of a completed achievement – it was a fulfilled existence. Fullness is not only and not necessarily having a satisfaction or satisfying of needs, it is rather an emotional experience of a deep internal accord with the resulting situation and with the actions taken; experience of adequacy with own essence from the one hand, and with the circumstances – from the other hand [3]. Existential fullness is the notion introduced in psychology by V. Frankl for the description of the quality of human life. The notion of fullness is the “happiness through dignity” (Aristotle), indivisible from personal beliefs and attitude [10].

**The aim** of the present research is the studying of special features of existential fullness among teenagers as a state preceding the formation of life values and senses, which they will implement in their further life. The research covered students-psychologists aged 17-18.

The **results** and their **discussion** of the experimental studying are described below. According to the purpose of our research the test “Existence Scale” (ES) by A. Laengle and K. Orgler was chosen for measuring the existence fullness as it is subjectively felt by the respondents [8].

ES is the first test in logotherapy and existential analysis logically derived from the theory. According to the concept of sense by V. Frankl, the SEM method for determining the sense had been previously developed, consisting of four successive steps.

Performance of these steps envisages the availability of four basic anthropological abilities of a human (abilities immanent to all humans): perception of reality, ability to see own subjective part and separate oneself from another individual (see his subjective part) – “Self-distancing”; feel, touch, get in resonance with the values – “Self-transcendence”; chose, reject all other variants in favor of a single one, make decisions – “Freedom”; implement in reality, realize own choice – “Responsibility”.

«Step» or «level» of the existential fullness reflects the value of consciousness in my life, how often I live with internal concord, whether my decisions and actions correspond to my essence, am I able to introduce something good, as I understand it, into my life? It is not the matter of how a person really

lives, but how he comprehends his life. The test reflects the subjective estimate by a person of his life.

ES represents a questionnaire consisting of 46 questions; the respondent answers the questions analyzing himself and his present life according to various aspects. The test allows determining the present state of the patient, the areas of abnormality and the course of therapy. This method is also used for determining the personal attitude to the professional activity, basic abilities required for finding the necessary life solutions and comprehending them. The analysis of the obtained results has shown the following.

*SD - «Self-distancing».* This indicator measures the ability of a person to “distance” from oneself; the ability not to focus on oneself, not to react on random stimuli, but to perceive the situation by reflecting upon it and taking an unbiased look at the reality. Self-distancing also measures the ability of internally freeing oneself from the captivity of affects, cautions and desires connected with them, without getting confused. 36,5% of the respondents showed a low rate according to this scale, which indicates the lack of self-distancing. This can also be a consequence of immaturity, some forms of internal doubts (conflicts, post-traumatic state, etc.). A somewhat narrowed perception of the reality and orientation in the surrounding events can be explained by excessive situational stresses. This subgroup is inclined to compulsive desires, thoughts about oneself and self-reproaches. People in this state may not realize what is happening with them, they are unable to realistically perceive the surrounding events, losing orientation and ability to analyze. In some cases a sharp reaction for irritants is possible.

The majority of students - 58,5%, demonstrate according to this scale a higher ability and clarity of perception of the situation. Their attention is constantly transferred to the outside world. Self-distancing in this case is increased.

Only for 5% of the respondents the ability of easily self-distancing has been determined. Externally it may seem that such people have no feelings and are only directed at functionality. However, if they have high ratings both in SD and ST scales, such people are capable of creating their actions not only for themselves, but for other people as well. Such person can completely dedicate his life to someone or something. Emotionally, they draw strength from the values they adhere to.

*ST – «Self-transcendence».* This ability defines the internal attitude to life experience, and a person can find and experience subjective values, which may reflect in the ability of receiving satisfaction, ability of suffering, possibility of emotional touch. According to this scale, 17,1% of the respondents demonstrated low ratings, that indicates that their life lacks emotions, it is functional and efficient. The arising emotions are considered as obstacles and sources of delusions.

70,7% of the respondents with average ratings according to this scale are more concerned about the correlation with their life and adhere to a responsible, attentive attitude to their present status. Their emotional internal world and internal abilities to feel the basic values and to focus on them are high.

Some of the respondents – 12,2%, possess a freely-accessible emotionality, indicated by their high ratings according to this scale. This makes them open to tolerance, ready for new experience – self-transcendence as a method of extending beyond the boundaries of oneself.

*F – «Freedom»*. This scale covers the ability to find realistic possibilities of action, to create a hierarchy in relation to their estimate and thus to adopt a personally-grounded decision. The ability to resolve depends from the one hand from the personality components (such as strength, concentration, courage, ability to stand up for own decisions), and from the other hand – from the available possibilities of a specific situation, which should be detected and analyzed in order to be able to make a proper choice. The correlation of these internal and external factors leads to the clarity of decision making.

Also, according to this scale, 14,8% of the respondents demonstrated low ratings, indicating indecision and uncertainty in their decisions, inability to adopt own decisions. Part of the respondents (73%) demonstrates a tendency of clarity and confidence in the formation of judgments and variants of solving own problems. A small portion of the respondents (12,2%) is inclined to evaluative, critical and dominant behavior, accompanied by intolerance to any limitations and aversion to constant relations. These people rather prefer avoiding sympathies, they remain inactive in inter-personal communication, usually because of the fear of being vulnerable.

*V – «Responsibility»*. This scale measures the ability to execute the decisions adopted on the basis of personal values. A person acts with the awareness of the necessity of this execution for oneself or due to obligations before someone else. The process of implementation of own decisions is backed up by the sense of confidence that these decisions are right. In case of lack of self-confidence, the compensatory function can be fulfilled by the sense of duty.

Among the respondents, 39% demonstrated low ratings. It means that those people do not feel a personal involvement in life. For them, life goes on its own; it is hardly subject to planning and is not determined by their own will. The sense of duty is not strongly expressed, but still can be formed.

56% of the respondents are more concerned about the correlation with their life and adhere to a responsible, attentive attitude to their present status. And only 5% of the respondents have a strong sense of duty due to consistent self-responsibility. However, these actions are often caused by the fear of consequences or by studied discipline.

Qualitative description of the summary indicators of the Existence Scale.

*P* – «*Personality*». The scale is formed from the sum of results of the scales SD and ST. It describes an important personal feature, namely, the cognitive and emotional accessibility of a person for oneself and for the world. Low rate of P can be considered as the sign of blocking and misuse of basic personal abilities; if such blockades last for a long time, they can result in personality disorders and psychoses. The rate of P also reflects the openness in human communication.

Thus, the research showed that 17% of the respondents are “closed” people. They are occupied with their own personal problems, demonstrating a certain immaturity. Also, an increased readiness of reacting on stresses psychosomatically exists. This can be formed as a result of prolonged mental stresses or personality disorders. The number of respondents, who are more “open to the world” and open to themselves is higher and totals 83%.

The results indicating that the respondents demonstrate higher ratings according to the scale “self-transcendence” compared to the scale “self-distancing” (SD <ST) are available. According to the experience of the test developers, it can indicate that these people have a strong emotional sensitivity, internal feeling and compassion, good ability to obtain satisfaction, which is, however, accompanied by the difficulties in establishing a distance and reserving an internal free space.

*E* - «*Existence*». The values of this scale are obtained by adding the indicators F and V, and are used for measuring the ability to resolutely and responsibly enter the world, getting involved in life. The scale indicates such an essential characteristic of human existence as the ability of orientation in this world, adopting own decisions and responsibly implementing them in life, thus changing it for the better. While the indicator P reflects the ability of a person to treat oneself (“internal world”), the indicator E indicates the ability of constructively communicating with the surrounding world, decisively and responsibly managing with it.

On the basis of the obtained results, we can state that 24,4% of the respondents face difficulties in adopting decisions in life, very close to complete passivity, as a result of such factors as lack of confidence in decision making, uncertainty in the “existential place” (Am I on the right place in life?), lack of responsibility, restraint, lack of knowledge about the right actions, low resistance to stresses, sensitivity to obstacles, etc.

Part of the respondents (73,2%) demonstrated a tendency of increase of resoluteness and responsibility in life. They strive for arranging their world and their life.

However, at the same time we can observe that for 41,4% of the respondents the rates according to the scale «Freedom» are higher compared to the

scale «Responsibility» ( $F > V$ ). This means, such people can be inclined to hastily delegate the responsibility to more “competent” people.

53,6% of the students (combination  $F < V$ ) are ready to enter the world, at the same time, certain problems can be revealed connected with a detachment toward a problem and a feeling that they are no free, but obliged to do something (sense of duty). Sometimes these feelings act as stresses, if they originate from depressive emotional experience.

For 5% of the respondents the indicators «Freedom» and «Responsibility» are equal ( $F=V$ ), thus supplementing each other. Such people equally correspond to the criteria of behavior stated above.

Finally, 2,4% of the respondents have a clear, constructive attitude to the world based on their own decision. Due to good orientation in specific contexts and confidence in own decision, such people are really able to implement something important in their life relying on the thoroughness and consistency of decision implementation, as wells as on the understanding of the duty to oneself.

*G – existential fullness of a specific personality.* This indicator shows that 26,83% of the respondents have sings of closure (self-centeredness and emotional inability for a dialog), lack of confidence. They lack responsible involvement in life. It reflects a low level of the general existential fullness.

46,34% of the respondents demonstrate an increasing internal openness. This allows a person striving for the challenges and propositions of the surrounding world.

At the same time, 21,95% of the respondents correspond to the criteria of principal openness, accessibility, perceptiveness, resoluteness, readiness for action and sense of duty. They are also considered vulnerable, strict to themselves, and, as a result, demonstrate high demands to themselves.

As it has been state above, the majority of the respondents have average ratings according to the results of application of this method. Thus, taking account of this feature, a comparative analysis has been made in order to analyze in detail the differences between young boys and girls in the determination of the level of consciousness of life.

In general, young boys demonstrate a somewhat higher level of comprehension of their life, discrepancy in the values of the indicator “Self-distancing” may indicate that the female respondents of this subgroup have a lower ability of self-perception in relation to the current situation compared to the male respondents.

Male respondents have higher rates according to scales SD (76%), F (68,7%), V (43,7%), E (80%). The scale G demonstrates almost equal results – 43,7% for the girls 44% for the boys.

Thus, the results of studying of the level of existential fullness in this youth group mainly demonstrate average rates. It indicates that the respondents demonstrate an increased ability of perception of the surrounding world, increasing clarity and strength in the formation of own judgments. The lowest rates of «Self-distancing (SD)» and «Responsibility (V)» indicate that this group of students is yet incapable easily self-distancing, they still have to practice on reducing the self-reproaching, compulsive actions, etc. In general, we can note that the majority of the respondents are concerned about the correlation with their life and adhere to a responsible, attentive attitude to their present status. It may be noted that the majority of the respondents (scale «Self-transcendence (ST)», «Freedom (F)») strive for a more emotional perception of the internal world and feel the basic values and focus on them.

**Conclusions.** The present research has been performed as an attempt of determining the state of existential sphere or the level of existential fullness in preadult age. It is still early to make conclusions on the formation of life values and the sense of life, however, we can indicate some tendencies. Another fact of interest is that each of the respondents (possibly, for the first time in his or her life) had a change of looking “inside oneself” and reveal the own attitude to the present. Due to this research we can see how the vision of self-identity and sense of life are formed in the preadult age. The results revealed in the process of questioning allow us determining the factors causing the formation of world outlooks of each of the respondents.

Thus, according to the method of the Existential Scale, we can see that the majority of the respondents are on the way to reaching the existential fullness. Mainly average rates according to all scales indicate that the respondents are highly-motivated for fulfilling their life by the sense of being, realizing its demands and correlating it with own values. However, this process, which individually takes a certain period of time, can be subject to changes in critical life situations, even in case of adult people. As it can be seen from our research, only an insignificant percentage of youth feels rather confident and is able to adopt own decisions, undertake responsibility for them and built relations with the world.

If a young person manages to solve these problems, his adequate identity is formed, which can further develop in the following main trends: formation of psychological intimacy, strive for closer inter-personal relationships; sense of time, ability to build plans for life, lack of fear of maturation and changes; development of productive, creative talents, ability to mobilize his internal resources and concentrate on a specific main activity; formation of a positive identity; personal self-determination and selection of positive examples to follow.



It appears important to eventually study the factors influencing the further development of the existential fullness, overcoming of internal conflicts and formation of a mature personality in the preadult age. Possibly, it is required to create facilities of psychological support in the social institutions.

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