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## ROUTES TO HAPPINESS AS THE PERSONALITY RESOURCES OF THE QUALITY OF LIFE

**Анотація.** Обґрунтовано інтерпретацію поняття «якість життя» у термінах усвідомлення людиною мети власного життя, відчуття залученості у нього і переживання внаслідок цього позитивних емоцій від задоволення собою як суб'єктом життєдіяльності і станів психологічного, соціального і суб'єктивного благополуччя. Визначено вірогідні особистісні чинники якості життя: метакогнітивну та емоційну компетентність, впевненість у самоефективності. На різних вибірках досліджуваних (120 осіб) емпірично перевірено достовірність отриманих результатів.

Ключові слова: якість життя, мета, залученість, емоційна компетентність, психологічне благополуччя.

**Аннотация.** Отмечается возрождение интереса к феномену качества жизни; описан подход к его концептуализации, открывающий новые перспективы для расширения психодиагностических приемов в предоставлении психологической помощи субъектам жизнедеятельности, осознании подходов к тому, как сделать свою жизнь счастливой, несмотря на непредсказуемость и сложность изменений, которые могут возникать. Качество жизни рассмотрено в контексте осознания человеком цели жизни и готовности к ее активной реализации. Выявлено влияние удовлетворенности субъекта жизнедеятельности собою на переживание состояний психологического, социального и субъективного благополучия. Эмпирически подтверждена роль метакогнитивной компетентности, эмоционального интеллекта и субъектной эффективности как личностных факторов успешности жизнедеятельности.

Ключевые слова: качество жизни, цель, вовлеченность, благополучие, субъектная эффективность.

**Problem identification.** Although the core meaning of the concept “quality of life” was identified by one of the most psychologically penetrating ancient philosophers Aristotle, who described the core meaning of the phenomenon in terms of “happiness, experienced when the soul is satisfied and everything works well” (Strnadova et al., 2016:106), the systematic scientific study of the phenomenon began only recently.

An impetus to studying the phenomenon was given by the publication at Springer of the voluminous “Encyclopedia of the Quality of life and Well-Being Research” (Michalos, 2014) and the “Handbook of Social Indicators and Quality of Life Research” (Land et al., 2012), both edited by K. C. Land, A. C. Michalos, J. M. Sirgy. Thanks to those publications three different approaches to the assessment of the quality of life have been identified: economic, sociological and psychological.

The economic approach reduces the quality of life to satisfying consumer preferences, the sociological one equates it with the fulfillment of the idea about a desirable social development of the individuals and the society, in which they live, and the

psychological approach is oriented toward studying various factors that determine the psychological, social and subjective well-being of the individual.

**The objective of this paper** is to substantiate that the psychological approach is likely to become a unifying one in studying the phenomenon “quality of life” on the individual level and to identify the scope of problems, to be investigated within this approach.

*The findings obtained by now in the investigation of the quality of life within the psychological approach*

Most of the publications dealing with studying the concept of the quality of life, as well as the forms of its behavioral manifestation and the likely personality precursors, have been predominantly based so far on analyzing the *health-related* issues. Within that orientation the individual perception of the quality of life was studied on *patients*, suffering from either physical or mental disorders (Varni et al., 2001; Kutko et al., 2001; Smykogub, 2001; Elkinton, 1966; Novik & Ionova, 2007; Wilson & Cleary, 1995). The World Health Organization (The WHOQOL Group, 1995) defined the *physical* aspects and the levels of autonomy, which are likely to tell negatively on the quality of life, experienced by the individuals. They are formulated as bio-medical indicators of the state of health related to the perception of the quality of life and include: the amount of the physical fatigue, pain, limits of mobility, dependence on medical assistance. The World Health Organization has also defined the quality of life not only with a narrow focus on the health-related issues, but also in a much broader sense as “the individuals’ perception of their position in life in the context of the culture and value systems, in which they, live, and in relation to their goals, expectations, standards and concepts”.

It is note-worthy that research with reference to the health-related issues, carried out on patients, also includes the description of the psychological consequences, which the state of health might entail, such as: the state-trait anxiety, depressive symptoms, changes in the dispositional traits.

A special trend of research represents the studies of the quality of life among the pressurized individuals. Some practically valuable results have been obtained with reference to the predictors of the health-related behavior and health-related quality of life.

Beside the health-related focus on studying the quality of life there has recently appeared within the psychological approach a *socio-psychological* orientation, an illustrative example of which is presented in one of the recent publications of Check researchers (Strnadova et al., 2016). The authors have demonstrated on a representative sample of student population that the quality of life can be assessed in terms of the diversity of the so called “life themes” which occupy the attention of the individuals in the course of pursuing different life goals and the level of satisfaction they experience thanks to their achievement of those goals. Using the method of the subjective questioning based on a guided interview, the authors assessed the variety of the ‘life themes’ in the experience of 150 university students and a relative significance attached to each “theme” as an indicator of the quality of life. Those “life themes” included: family, education (school), work, friends, health, money, sport, traveling, and the like. The results of their research, as the authors commented upon in the conclusion, confirmed the preference of the following traditional values in the experience of the Check students: family, education and work. The satisfaction with the fulfillment of the life tasks, indicative of those ‘themes’ (values), the authors consider to be, as one can gather, the key indicator of the quality of life. They also stress the point in this connection, that the value of *money* shows a decreasing rate of preference, reflecting the so called “affluence paradox”, i.e. a comparatively lower level of significance attributed to the material well-being in the individuals’ evaluation of the quality of life. At the same time the value of *health* has a constant rate (Strnadova et al., 2016).

Though the referred to research is a good example of the approach to the investigation of the quality of life, it demonstrates vividly that without a psychological substan-

tiation of the results, explaining why sticking to the traditional “themes “or values is more preferable for the quality of life, than having a greater variety of equally significant values, this approach cannot be considered sufficient for the adequate assessment of the phenomenon “quality of life”.

Other issues, that also attract the attention of researchers within the psychological approach to the investigation of the quality of life, are related to the *methods* of assessing the quality of life. The major method used so far is the subjective assessment by the individuals of their *satisfaction with life*, using predominantly the test developed by E. Diener et al (1984), which in combination with PANAS (Positive and Negative Affectivity Schedule) provides the measure of the so called “Subjective well-being”.

Some publications are devoted to studying the role of various coping strategies in overcoming life problems (Biron, 2015), to the impact of the personality values on the individual’s quality of life (Scherba et al., 2014), to the differences in the quality of life, experienced by various strata of population (Yevdokymova & Tymtsiv, 2015).

In a recently published comprehensive study of the Ukrainian psychologists (Ecological and psychological predictors of the quality of life..., 2013) the attention is focused on the analysis of the impact of ecological and psychological factors on determining the quality of life. It has been found within this approach, that despite the generally recognized severity of the anticipated consequences for the ecology and human health of the radio-active pollution, psychological factors appear to be more significant determinants of the individual’s appraisal of one’s quality of life, than the physical ones per se.

A brief review of the “state of the art”, so to speak, in the investigation of the psychological indicators of the quality of life seems to show that it is reasonable to return to the generalized *new/old* psychological indicator of the quality of life, predicted by Aristotle, – *happiness*, since now its core meaning has been adequately “dissolved” in terms of the concepts, denoting the “routes to achieving happiness,” such as: *meaning, engagement and positive emotions*, entailed by them. This issue has been chosen as the major objective of the present research, intended, in particular, to the identification of the personality precursors of the positive functioning on the individual level.

The nomenclature of the psychological concepts, which have been used for the fulfillment of the task of this research, included the following three groups of psychic phenomena: 1) those necessary for the operationalization of the routes to happiness, 2) the concepts, with the help of which it is possible to identify the personality precursors of happiness, “dissolved” with reference to engagement, meaning and positive emotions, and 3) the anticipated consequential outcomes of experiencing happiness, described in terms of different ramifications of the well-being states.

It has appeared to be an attainable task, since in the contemporary psychology there is by now a great number of the concepts, which could serve the purpose of the adequate description of the quality of life like the “flow” (Csikszentmihalyi, 1991); various forms of experiencing the lasting states of well-being such as: psychological, social, and subjective well-being (Ryff, 1989; Keyes, 1998; Diener, 1984); descriptions of the factors, that stimulate the appearance of those states and lead to the formation of the so called “mental health continuum” (Keyes, 2002), and the like. At the same time there has been identified a special concept for describing an undesirable tendency of some individuals to ascribe one’s coping problems exclusively to the external causes and resort to *self-handicapping* (Berglas & Jones, 1978) and other forms of unproductive behavior.

*An approach to the operationalization of the “routes to happiness” by “dissolving” the meaning of the concept “happiness”*

The purpose of this part of the paper is to substantiate the prospects of returning to the old idea, formulated by Aristotle, as to the role of happiness in the positive personality functioning, “dissolved” into the routes, leading to its experiencing.

The terminological collocation “dissolved happiness“ was suggested by positive psychologists not in the context of studying the quality of life, but much earlier, when

they sought the methods of assessing the *increments in happiness* under the impact of the so called “positive interventions” – specific psychological techniques, designed by them for enhancing the individuals’ well-being (Seligman, Steen, Park, Peterson, 2005). The concept “happiness” at that time was characterized as an *unwieldy* notion, which could be used only in the so called “*a theoretical*” sense. To wave that obstacle for using the notion in the scientifically valid research, it was “dissolved” by the above mentioned authors into the following three “routes to achieving happiness”: *engagement, meaning and positive emotions*. Those notions can be measured (unlike happiness) in terms of their levels, which allows to use them in such terminological collocations, as “*engaged life*”, “*meaningful life*” and “*pleasant life*”.

Thanks to this idea the psychological approach to studying the quality of life has acquired a real potential of becoming a unifying one in studying the quality of life, since within this approach both: the consumer preferences as well as the desirable social development attainments of the individual can be studied most profoundly.

The identification of the criteria for the assessment of those three types of life (the search of which is still underway) also opens up the prospects of studying the personality factors that are likely to predict either positive or, on the contrary, negative personality functioning. This is practically significant for planning the appropriate educational programs in the course of the institutionalized knowledge acquisition and for rendering psychological aid to the clients of different age groups in the counseling practice.

As it has been mentioned above, many contemporary researchers consider that the most adequate definition of the core meaning of the quality of life could be given in terms of happiness, had it not been a “*scientifically unwieldy*” concept (Lyubomirski, 2008). This precaution was first formulated by the researchers in the field of positive psychology, cited above. They intended to use the concept of happiness for the assessment of the likely changes in the states of the people, subjected to the so called “positive interventions” and had to assess the week by week increments in the levels of happiness as indicators of the strive to achieve the so called “*authentic happiness*” (Seligman, 2002). They reasonably stated, that the enhancement of happiness could be reliably measured, had the concept of happiness been “dissolved” into the “*routes*” to its achievement (Diener & Biswas-Diener, 2012).

Three routes to happiness have been identified for the purpose, namely: positive emotions and pleasure (indicative of pleasant life), engagement (the engaged life) and meaning (meaningful life). Their research of 2005 (Seligman et al., 2005) suggested that people reliably differed according to the type of life, they pursued, and that the most satisfied with life appeared to be those people who oriented their pursuits toward all three routes to happiness, referred to above, with the greatest weight carried by *meaning* and *engagement* (Seligman et al., 2005). The researchers mentioned above also claimed, that happiness was not an epiphenomenon. On the contrary, it is causal and brings many more benefits than just feeling good. Happy people have been proved to be healthier, more successful and more socially engaged. It was also demonstrated that the causal direction was, so to speak, both ways (Lyubomirsky et al., 2006).

So, summarizing the results of this brief review of the investigations, related to the definition of the meaning of the phenomenon ‘quality of life’, it is possible to conclude that, in fact, there are no objective operational criteria for its assessment so far, but at the same time there is an understanding of how to identify them, which allows to plan special research projects to test the anticipated efforts in this direction.

*The likely personality precursors of the quality of life and methods of their empirical testing*

To illustrate the role of the personality factors in determining the quality of life on the individual’s level we have chosen at this stage of the problem investigation three basic personality characteristics, which, in our opinion, determine positive personality functioning in the first rate, namely: the quality of *thinking*, the abilities of *interacting*

with other people and the *efficacy of self-regulation* in the course of pursuing major life goals.

The quality of thinking was assessed in terms of the *metacognitive competence*, the abilities of interacting with other people and to control emotions were evaluated in terms of the level of *emotional intelligence* attained and the abilities to control one's behavior as the agent of life were defined in terms of the *self-efficacy beliefs*.

All the personality factors, listed above, have positive correlations with life satisfaction, subjective well-being, and the personality factors, indicative of the disposition to self-evolution (Kusikova, 2012) and coping strategies for the sample of 120 undergraduate students (the data of Nosenko, 2014).

When the research participants were subdivided into two clusters on the criterion of their academic achievements, indicative of the quality of their academic life (assessed in terms of the GPA), the differences between the members of the opposite clusters in their psychological characteristics were found statistically significant. The individuals with higher level of their academic progress, which can be considered as indicative of the better quality of their academic life (confirmed by the higher levels of satisfaction with life) appeared to differ on a number of personality characteristics, including conscientiousness, openness to experience, emotional stability.

Table 1 illustrates the role of the *social activity* of the individuals, which also makes contribution into their well-being, assessed, as shown below, in terms of their psychological well-being.

Table 1

**Differences in psychological well-being between the groups of socially-active individuals (volunteers) and the individuals, who do not take part in the self-initiated social activity**

Psychological well-being scales	Mean groups values		t-value	P
	volunteers (n=30)	non-volunteers (n=30)		
Favorable interpersonal relations	6,8	5,8	2,4	p < .05
Autonomy	6,6	5,8	3	p < .01
Ecological mastery	5,3	5,5	0,8	not significant
Personal growth	6,9	6	2,1	p < .05
Purpose in line	6,5	5,3	3,1	p < .01
Self-acceptance	5,5	5,1	1,7	p = .10 (not significant)
Psychological well-being	7,1	6,3	3,2	p < .01

We have also checked the role of religious beliefs in enhancing the subjective appraisal by the individuals of their well-being. Like the meaning, imparted to life by the social activity, the spiritual meaning, formed under the influence of the religious belief, has been demonstrated to make the life of believers meaningful and engaged, The believers see meaning in sticking to their beliefs in their everyday life, in helping other people to acquire meaning in life and thanks to this they enjoy high levels of all the three forms of well-being: psychological, social and subjective.

Table 2 below demonstrates differences between the believers and non-believers in social well-being.

The results, presented above, clearly show, that religious belief, which makes the life of the believers both meaningful and engaged, positively tells on their social activity, social contribution, and overall social well-being.

Table 2

**Intergroup differences in social well-being between the believers and not-believers**

Social well-being scales	Mean values of the variables in the groups of believers and not-believers		U-Mann-Whitney criterion	p
	believers (n=28)	not-believers (n=32)		
Social involvement	10,46	9,81	424	0,720
Social activity	14,14	12,4	<b>394,5*</b>	0,000
Social acceptance	14,57	14,12	580	0,571
Social contribution	14,46	11,53	<b>390*</b>	0,000
Social integration	13,28	12,5	415	0,387
Overall social well-being	63,92	60,21	<b>410*</b>	0,000

\* the results are statistically significant on the level of  $p \leq 0,001$

Table 3 shows differences between the individuals in the levels of their emotional and social intelligence depending on the quality of their academic life operationalized in terms of GPA and Life satisfaction.

Table 3

**Comparative characteristics of the levels of emotional intelligence in the individuals with different characteristics of the quality of academic life operationalized in terms of GPA and life satisfaction**

Indicators of emotional intelligence		Mean values of the variables		t-value	p*
		Group one	Group 2		
Emotional Intelligence	Understanding the emotions of other people	35,68	22,36	<b>18,09</b>	0.001
	Regulation of the emotions of other people	29,52	16,88	<b>18,99</b>	0.001
	Understanding of one's own emotions	28,96	15,28	<b>23,39</b>	0.001
	Regulation of one's own emotions	20,62	12,24	<b>16,43</b>	0.001
	Expression control	18,73	11,16	<b>12,26</b>	0.001
	Intrapersonal emotional intelligence (an overall measure)	68,32	38,68	<b>22,79</b>	0.001
	Interpersonal emotional intelligence (an overall measure)	65,19	39,24	<b>21,91</b>	0.001
	Regulation of emotions	68,87	40,28	<b>22,87</b>	0.001
	Understanding emotions	64,64	37,64	<b>29,67</b>	0.001
	Overall measure of emotional intelligence	133,52	77,92	<b>28,70</b>	0.001
Social Intelligence Subtest	Social intelligence ( the ability to realize the consequences of one's behavior)	10,50	7,04	<b>7,09</b>	0.001
	The ability to understand the non-verbal information	8,43	6,04	<b>5,10</b>	0.001
	The ability to understand the meaning of words depending on the interpersonal relationships	8,96	6,08	<b>5,81</b>	0.001
	The ability to understand the logics of the complicated situations in the course of interaction with others	7,50	4,12	<b>7,06</b>	0.001

**Conclusion.** The research findings presented in this paper have demonstrated both theoretically and empirically that there are at least, two major routes to experiencing happiness and achieving high quality of life – meaning and engagement. We have demonstrated this statement with reference to different groups of people: students in the course of education acquisition, young people, who take an active part in volunteering movement, demonstrating self-initiated social activity, elderly lonely religious people for whom the individual religiosity opens up the possibilities to communicate with other

believers. All the groups of our research participants felt satisfied with life, when they realized that their life was *meaningful* and *engaged*. For the students successful knowledge acquisition was meaningful and made them highly engaged. They felt satisfied with life when they were satisfied with themselves as the subjects of knowledge acquisition. The personality factors which predicted success of the learners were metacognitive competence, achievement motivation and conscientiousness.

The social workers were satisfied with themselves and their life when they were engaged in rendering aid to those who needed it. The major personality predictor of success for this category of subjects was their emotional competence and proneness to experience satisfaction when rendering aid to other people, who needed social support. This category of subjects experienced high level of social well-being. As to the religious people, their social well-being appeared to be as high as that of the people active in the self-initiated social work. This finding can be explained by the fact, that religious belief stimulates the perception of other believers as spiritually related people. On the whole the findings of the research, presented in the paper, have confirmed its major assumption that the routes to experiencing happiness are meaning, engagement and positive emotions, which they entail, thanks to the satisfaction with one as the agent of life.

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### **ABUSE. INCEST. – HOPE FOR RECOVERY...**

**Анотація.** Проаналізовано феномен, який багатьма психологами, психотерапевтами та їхніми пацієнтами розцінюється як табуована тема, що спричиняє занадто багато емоційного навантаження всім асоційованим особам, – феномен інцесту та сімейного кривдження. Аналіз починається описом прикладів і конкретних переживань постраждалих від інцесту та продовжується дослідженням авторської методології встановлення випадків інцесту у вибірці кейсів, у роботу з якими автор була залучена.

Ключові слова: інцест, зловживання, травма, психологічна допомога.

**Аннотация.** Представлен широкий контекст для системного понимания проблемы последствий сексуального злоупотребления ребенком, а именно инцеста. На примере историй, рассказываемых взрослыми пациентками, показано влияние инцеста на самооценку, сложности в построении близких взаимоотношений и