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VOLUNTEERING IMPACT ON LIFE SATISFACTION IN ADOLESCENCE

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Abstract. *The article presents the results of a study on the subjective life satisfaction in adolescents engaged in volunteer activities. The study involved 30 teenage volunteers from the Press Club youth club, Saint-Petersburg. The study was conducted with the use of a questionnaire and a set of psychological techniques – a mini-essay, O.F. Potemkina’s method for diagnosing socio-psychological attitudes of an individual in the motivational-needs sphere, E. Diener’s “Life Satisfaction Scale” method, and statistical data analysis. The results showed that the subjects reported above-average levels of life satisfaction. The hypothesis that subjective life satisfaction among adolescent volunteers is linked to performance orientation, work ethic, and altruism, was fully confirmed. The study identified socio-psychological factors influencing adolescents’ subjective life satisfaction, with friends, family, and volunteering, being the most significant. Based on the results of the study, recommendations were proposed for organizing volunteer activities at the Press Club*

youth club.

Keywords: *work activity, personality attitudes, altruism, family, social environment, adolescent motivation.*

ВЛИЯНИЕ ВОЛОНТЕРСТВА НА УДОВЛЕТВОРЕННОСТЬ ЖИЗНЬЮ ПОДРОСТКОВ

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Аннотация. В статье приводятся результаты исследования субъективной удовлетворенности жизнью подростков, занимающихся волонтерской деятельностью. В исследовании принимали участие 30 подростков-волонтеров подростково-молодежного клуба «Пресс-клуб», Санкт-Петербург. Исследование проводилось с использованием анкетирования и комплекса психологических методик – мини-сочинения, методики диагностики социально-психологических установок личности в мотивационно-потребностной сфере О.Ф. Потемкиной, методики Э. Динера «Шкала удовлетворенности жизнью» и статистического анализа данных. Результаты показали, что у испытуемых преобладает уровень удовлетворённости жизнью выше среднего. Гипотеза о существовании взаимосвязи субъективной удовлетворённости жизнью подростков-волонтеров с ориентированностью на результат деятельности, труд и альтруизм, полностью подтвердилась. В ходе

исследования выявлены социально-психологические факторы, влияющие на переживание субъективной удовлетворенности жизнью подростков, среди которых наиболее значимыми оказались друзья, семья и волонтерство. По результатам исследования предложены рекомендации по организации волонтерской деятельности базе ПМК «Пресс-клуб».

Ключевые слова: трудовая деятельность, установки личности, альтруизм, семья, социальное окружение, мотивация подростков.

Introduction

Modern society orients the younger generation towards an active social position (Filyasova, 2021a), develops responsibility and creates conditions for successful self-realization (Solovieva, Arutyunyan, 2023). Volunteering becomes a powerful contribution to the positive development of teenagers, influencing their psychological well-being, social adaptation and professional self-determination.

Volunteering and psychological well-being. Adolescent subjective well-being is a complex construct influenced by a multitude of factors, encompassing both cognitive and affective components (Nikolaeva, 2018). This period of development is marked by significant identity formation and building their identity (Jovanović, 2022). The dual-cycle processes of identity exploration and life satisfaction are intricately intertwined, suggesting a dynamic interplay between these processes for positive well-being outcomes (Moor, 2023). Furthermore, an understanding of adolescent well-being necessitates a consideration of depressive symptoms and external factors contributing to overall life satisfaction.

Participation in volunteer projects is directly linked to experiencing happiness (Novikova, 2019) and overall life satisfaction. Volunteering contributes to improved academic performance in school and also addresses the need to expand friendships and educational interests (Lanshchikov, 2025). In the process of volunteering, teenagers not only get rid of their complexes (Filyasova, 2023), but also discover more and more talents in themselves, forming an inner core (Ananchenko, 2021) and a positive outlook. An important aspect is improving internal control of one's behavior, which is

expressed in the development of communicative control and the ability to express positive opinions about the actions of others. Volunteers, as a rule, have normal self-esteem (Larina, 2024) and independence of their judgments, while showing respect for the opinions of others.

Social adaptation and interpersonal relationships. Volunteering has a positive impact on adolescents' social connections (Savenkov, 2024). Research shows that volunteers have better relationships with their families (Filyasova, 2020), with teachers and friends (Grebennikova, 2025), and also understand themselves better (Kupchenko, Gil, 2021). Active social activities help improve relationships with peers. Volunteering develops an active, proactive, and responsible personality that is well-liked by others (Babayan, Avanesyan, Tatarenko, 2023). Respect and approval. Volunteering is an effective tool for preventing deviant behavior and saves many schoolchildren from ill-considered actions (Stepanov, 2020).

Volunteering and spiritual and moral development. The contribution of volunteering to the development of spiritual and moral qualities is invaluable (Grigorieva, 2020). Participation in socially significant activities contributes to the development of a love of work and the formation of high moral qualities (Belyaeva, Salnikov, Chernyshev, 2018). Volunteers demonstrate responsibility, sociability, self-confidence, responsiveness, tolerance, mercy, compassion and empathy (Uspenskaya, 2022). Volunteering helps develop life values and attitudes, as well as expand one's social circle.

Volunteering and Professional Self-Determination. Research (Chen, Cheng, 2020) emphasizes the importance of both dispositional and narrative-specific approaches to meaning making in understanding adolescent mental health. A key element contributing to overall well-being is purpose identification. Studies have demonstrated that purpose identification predicted enhanced life satisfaction in adolescence. Conversely, an insufficient search for meaning contributes to poorer mental health outcomes in late adolescence, highlighting the detrimental impact and direction during this critical developmental period. Further investigation revealed that the interaction between the presence of meaning, search for meaning, and educational

stages significantly influenced mental health outcomes (Meng, et al., 2025). Longitudinal studies have confirmed the relationship between purpose identification trajectory and depressive symptoms, solidifying the need for encouraging purpose exploration in youth to prevent mental health downturn.

Participation in the implementation of social projects (Baranova et al., 2025) provides teenagers with the opportunity to define meanings in terms of a profession, try themselves in various fields of activity, and gain practical experience (Pavlenko, Yartseva, 2024), better understanding of one's abilities. This contributes to the correct choice of profession and, in general, the development of readiness for social self-realization in adolescents in a social environment oriented toward high demands. Young people are becoming more open and self-confident in matters of self-knowledge and self-development, searching for ways to self-actualize, and recognizing the importance of forecasting and planning their life path. An active position in professional self-determination contributes to successful integration into the profession in the context of increased demands from employers in the labor market (Filyasova, 2022).

Beyond meaning and identity, the construct of career adaptability has emerged as a significant predictor of positive outcomes. The relationship between career adaptability and life satisfaction has received increasing attention, and recent research is beginning to show that courage can have mediating effects. Recent findings further suggest that career adaptability and courage contribute to adolescent mental health, with increased career adaptability and courage resulting in improved life satisfaction (Ginevra, et al., 2018). Hence, promoting adolescent life satisfaction requires a holistic approach that addresses identity formation, facilitates meaning-making processes, and fosters career adaptability.

Thus, volunteering has undoubted social effectiveness (Kolykhalova, 2023), having a comprehensive positive impact on adolescents. Engaging adolescents in volunteer activities is an important task for modern society, contributing to the development of competent, responsible, and socially active citizens.

Materials and methods

The aim of this study is to examine subjective life satisfaction in adolescents engaged in volunteer activities. The study involved students from the Press Club Teenage and Youth Club Vasileostrovsky district of Saint-Petersburg, Russia, involving 30 teenagers aged 14 to 16, including 18 girls and 12 boys. The Press Club operates in accordance with the Regulations on the teenage and youth club "Press Club" of the Vasileostrovsky district of Saint-Petersburg dated August 31, 2012. The main activity of the club is volunteering. One of the programs of the Press Club is "Volunteering Unites Hearts", the purpose of which is to train a team of volunteers to implement volunteer programs and projects. The program objectives are (1) volunteer motivation; (2) teambuilding among volunteers; (3) development and formation of the necessary knowledge, skills and abilities for the implementation of volunteer programs and projects. The expected result is a cohesive, motivated team of volunteers capable of competently and efficiently implementing volunteer programs and projects. The study was organized with the application of a comparative method. The empirical group of methods is represented by questionnaires and psychological tests. Before conducting the methods, detailed instructions were given to the respondents. The following psychological methods were used: (1) a questionnaire; (2) mini-essay on the topic "Can I call myself happy and why?"; (3) methodology for diagnosing socio-psychological attitudes of an individual in the motivational-needs sphere by O.F. Potemkina (Potemkina, 1993); (4) E. Diener's life satisfaction scale (Diener et al., 1985). The results of the empirical study were processed with the help of statistics methods. The hypothesis of the study is that there is a relationship between subjective life satisfaction of teenage volunteers and focus on the results of activities, work and altruism.

Characterization of the research methods. In accordance with the objectives of the study, a questionnaire was compiled consisting of 15 questions and included questions aimed at identifying motivation for volunteering and its emotional component. The questionnaire includes both closed-ended questions with multiple-choice answers (gender, age, hobbies/interests) and open-ended questions directly related to the topic and purpose of our work (What feelings do you experience when

volunteering? Why did you decide to become a volunteer? What attracts you to volunteering?).

A mini-essay on the topic "Can I call myself happy and why?" This wording of the assignment is explained by the fact that the phenomenon of "happiness" is more easily understood by teenagers, who attach their own meaning to the concept. The essay is aimed at identification of the key social and psychological factors influencing the subjective life satisfaction of adolescent volunteers. The respondents were asked to express in words all their thoughts and feelings regarding their lives and life satisfaction.

O.F. Potemkina's method for diagnosing individual socio-psychological attitudes in the motivational-needs sphere consists of 80 questions that provide answers to the question "What is important in life?" The first part, 40 questions, reveals what is more important to a person: altruism or egoism, process or result. The second part, the next 40 questions, is designed to assess the significance of freedom or power, job content or money. The methodology allows us to identify the predisposition in adolescents engaged in volunteer activities to significant socio-psychological attitudes in the motivational-needs sphere.

E. Diener's *Satisfaction with Life Scale* is a brief self-screening questionnaire designed for mass surveys of respondents regarding their subjective satisfaction with their lives. This method allows researchers to assess respondents' overall level of life satisfaction.

Results

When processing the answers to question No. 6: "What do you think about volunteering?", the following key points were identified: volunteering is the opportunity to attend interesting events (3.3%); volunteering means meeting new people (6.6%); everyone should do volunteering (6.6%); volunteering is about bringing joy to people (6.6%); volunteering is fashionable (3.3%); volunteering is free, unselfish help to others (66%); volunteering is fun (6.6%). The majority of the respondents define volunteering as unpaid, selfless assistance. We can assume that this is precisely what motivates teenagers to volunteer.

The results of processing the answers to question No. 12: "What attracts you to volunteering?" revealed the following results: the opportunity to change the world for the better (9.9%); the opportunity to bring smiles and joy to people (3.3%); self-realization (3.3%); new acquaintances (6.6%); new knowledge, skills and abilities (13.2%); communication (3.3%); participation in interesting events (6.6%); benefits to society (16.5%); positive emotions (33%); souvenirs (3.3%). Among the obtained, motivational areas such as the acquisition of positive emotions, benefits to society, and the acquisition of new practical knowledge, skills, and abilities clearly stand out.

The most interesting responses were to question 14: "What feelings do you experience while volunteering?" Undoubtedly, the teenagers who volunteered expressed the most pronounced emotions and feelings of joy (49.5%) and happiness (26.4%).

To summarize all of the above, we can see that, in general, adolescents have a positive attitude towards volunteering, understanding it as gratuitous and selfless help to others. Moreover, it is worth noting that the beginning of their volunteer journey is frequently motivated by such components as positive emotions, benefit to society, as well as the acquisition of practical knowledge, skills, and abilities.

Essay analysis. The teenagers were asked to write a short essay on the topic "Can I call myself happy and why?" More than 80% of the respondents confidently stated that they were happy. "...Yes, I can! Because at this stage of my life, I have everything anyone could ever want...", "...My life is as it should be, and I see no point in being upset about anything. On the contrary, I should enjoy it even more, so that over time, with the help of this joy, it will become even better..." Those who remained are generally satisfied with their lives, but there are certain circumstances that prevent them from unconditionally considering themselves happy. "...At the moment, I'm not completely sure that I'm happy."

When processing the results, the following factors were identified that influence the subjective experience of life satisfaction in adolescent volunteers: family (75.9%); friends (92.4%); health (23.1%); hobbies (62.7%); volunteering (75.9%); life goals (23.1%). From these data, we conclude that teenagers rank their friends as the most

important factor influencing their subjective experience of happiness, which is not surprising. "...I consider myself a happy person because I have a large number of friends who can help me at one time or another...", "...I have many friends for whom I am an important person in their lives, they do not look at my well-being, and the most important thing for them is communication. I really appreciate this and I think that if a person has such friends, one is a happy person..."

Family and volunteering tied for second place. The teenagers specifically mentioned volunteering, but there is a bias in that some respondents also mentioned "hobbies," which does not rule out the possibility that they specifically meant volunteering. Nevertheless, the results speak for themselves. "...I can call myself a happy person because I have a home, family, and friends...", "...My hobbies allow me to satisfy my needs and do something I enjoy – volunteering. I get pleasure from helping others because it makes me happy to see their smiles. I also feel happy after completing this or that difficult and enjoyable task...", "...Of course! I'm a volunteer! I spend most of my time doing what I enjoy and with whom I enjoy doing it..."

This is precisely what should be noted, since the volunteers highly value their volunteer activities, considering it an integral part of their lives, which affects their subjective satisfaction.

The results of the study based on the Life Satisfaction Scale method. The data showed that the average score for the methodology among the respondents was 20 points. We divided the figures into two groups: from 7 to 21 points and from 21 to 35 points. As can be inferred, 54% of the adolescents scored average on the scale (from 7 to 21 points), while 46% scored above average. It should be noted that the difference between the groups is only 9%, which indicates that, in general, the respondents give a high subjective assessment of their satisfaction with life.

The results of the study based on the method "Diagnostics of socio-psychological attitudes of the individual in the motivational-needs sphere". The average values for the scales are as follows (minimum score – 1, maximum – 10): process orientation – 6.03 points; result orientation – 7.73 points; altruism orientation – 7.87 points; egoism orientation – 4.73 points; orientation towards work – 7.77 points;

orientation towards freedom – 6.13 points; orientation towards power – 5.9 points; orientation towards money – 4.87 points. The results show that the highest score is on the scales of “orientation towards altruism” (7.87 points), “orientation towards work” (7.77 points) and “orientation towards results” (7.73 points).

The technique reveals a focus on one of two opposing scales. The pairs are "process" – "result," "altruism" – "egoism," "work" – "freedom," and "power" – "money". We found that 77% of the respondents are more focused on the result than on the process of the activity itself (23%). Furthermore, 90% of the teenagers are oriented toward altruism rather than selfishness (10%). These are exceptionally high figures – the number of adolescent volunteers with an altruistic orientation is nine times higher than those with a selfish orientation. As can be inferred, 80% of the respondents are predominantly work-oriented individuals rather than freedom-oriented individuals (23%). The values between the scales “orientation towards power” and “orientation towards money” identically repeat the results of the previous two scales – “orientation towards work” and “orientation towards freedom”. The majority of the teenagers (77%) are primarily power-oriented, while 23% are money-oriented. Among the teenagers involved in volunteer activities, the most prevalent scales are “result orientation” (77%), “altruism orientation” (90%), “work orientation” (77%), and “power orientation” (77%).

Statistical data processing. The results obtained with the help of diagnosing individual social and psychological attitudes in the motivational-need sphere and the life satisfaction scale were compared. For statistical data processing, the computer program SPSS Statistics was used. The average scores for the *Life Satisfaction Scale* are 20.03, with a range of 4.60 (out of a maximum of 35 points), indicating high average scores for the group. Furthermore, we can observe average scores for the scales of the socio-psychological personality assessment method in the motivational-needs domain. The results showed a relevant (at the 0.05 level) correlation between such indicators as “result orientation” and “altruism orientation” ($r = 0.66$, $p = 0.00$), “result orientation” and “work orientation” ($r = 0.78$, $p = 0.00$), “altruism orientation” and “work orientation” ($r = 0.76$, $p = 0.00$), "orientation towards freedom" and "orientation

towards money" ($r = 0.58, p = 0.00$). There is also an inverse relationship between the indicators "orientation towards results" and "orientation towards money" ($r = -0.56, p = 0.00$), "orientation towards work" and "orientation towards money" ($r = -0.5, p = 0.00$).

In addition, there is a relevant (at the 0.01 level) correlation between such indicators as "process orientation" and "money orientation" ($r = 0.36, p = 0.05$), "money orientation" and "egoism orientation" ($r = 0.42, p = 0.02$). There is an inverse relationship between the indicators "work orientation" and "egoism orientation" ($r = -0.39, p = 0.03$).

The most significant results for us are the correlation (at the 0.01 level) between such scales as "life satisfaction" and "work orientation" ($r = 0.43, p = 0.02$), "life satisfaction" and "result orientation" ($r = 0.42, p = 0.02$), "life satisfaction" and "altruism orientation" ($r = 0.41, p = 0.03$).

For the most accurate result, we used the method of correlation pleiades (Fig. 1) in order to find such groups of features in which the correlation relationship (the sum of the moduli of the correlation coefficients between the parameters of one group (intra-pleiad relationship) is large enough, whereas the relationship between parameters from different groups (inter-pleiad relationship) is small.

The result-oriented respondents are among the most reliable. They can achieve results in their work despite the influence of miscellaneous factors, obstacles, and setbacks (Filyasova, 2021b). Such people approach their work more responsibly than those who are process-oriented. People who pursue altruistic values, often to their own detriment, deserve every respect. Altruism is the most valuable social motivation, the presence of which distinguishes a mature personality. People who are work-oriented rely on their time and energy to accomplish a goal. Work brings them more joy and pleasure than any other activity.

After interpreting and comparing the obtained results and assessing them against the stated hypothesis, the following was revealed: adolescents involved in volunteer activities have high rates of life satisfaction. Furthermore, we found a correlation between subjective life satisfaction and work-oriented, results-oriented, and altruistic

behavior. Therefore, the hypothesis is fully supported.

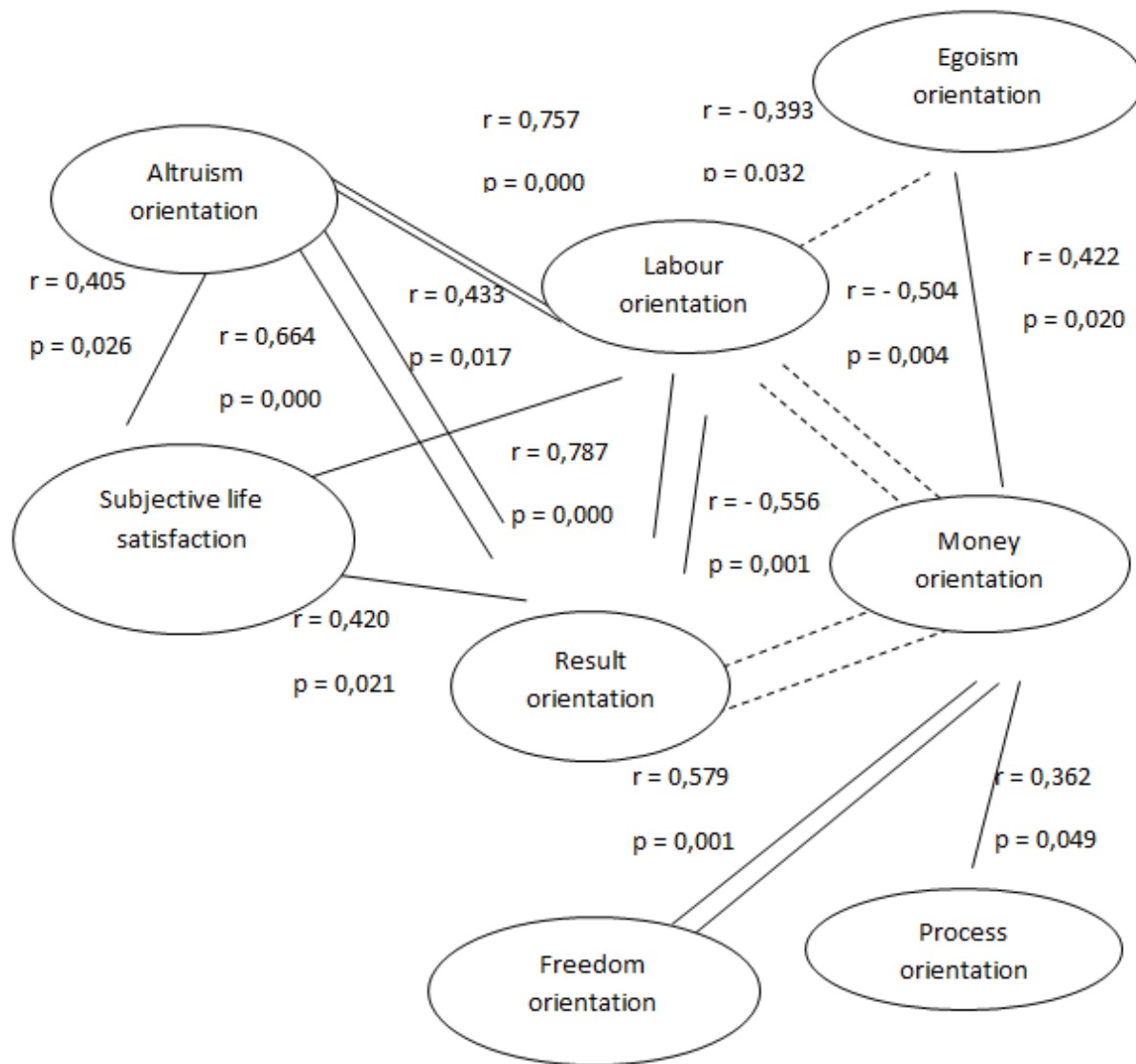


Fig. 1 - Correlation Pleiades

Recommendations for organizing volunteer activities addressed to the Press Club. After processing the data obtained, based on the research results, we identified the following recommendations for organizing volunteer activities:

- The involvement of teenagers in volunteer activities should be increased since one of the main factors influencing life satisfaction among teen volunteers is the presence of friends, more teenagers should be involved.

- Interactions with adolescents' families should be improved. Teenagers strive to be noticed, accepted into "adult society," and to be proud of their achievements receiving social approval. Parental opinions are crucial during adolescence. Discussions, open lessons, and events with parental involvement should be more

frequently conducted.

- The study found that 77% of the adolescents are more results-oriented than process-oriented. This suggests that it is important to prioritize rewarding volunteers for their accomplishments, such as certificates, letters of appreciation, merchandise, off-site events, among others. It is also necessary to hold more events where the results of volunteer activities are most clearly expressed.

- More than 75% of the adolescents are work-oriented, meaning they spare no effort or time to do something meaningful and useful. They should be given the opportunity to create and implement a project or specific event themselves, support their initiative in every possible way, which will increase their motivation to volunteer and have a positive impact on their life satisfaction.

Conclusion

The survey results revealed that 66% of the respondents view volunteering as a form of gratuitous, selfless assistance to others; 33% of the respondents found positive emotions to be the most appealing aspect of volunteering; 50% of the respondents experienced joy from volunteering, and 26% described the feeling they experienced as happiness.

Over 80% of the respondents confidently stated that they are completely satisfied with their lives; 92% of the teenagers identified such a factor as having friends as key to their feeling of subjective satisfaction with life; 76% of the teenagers rank family and volunteering as the second most important factors.

There is a significant relationship between the subjective life satisfaction in adolescents engaged in volunteer activities and their focus on work, results and altruism, which fully confirms our hypothesis. In addition, the methodology showed an inverse relationship between focus on results and money, focus on work and egoism, and focus on work and money. There is also a connection between orientation towards results and altruism, orientation towards results and work, orientation towards altruism and work, orientation towards freedom and money, orientation towards process and money, orientation towards money and egoism.

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