

VALUES, PERSONALITY TRAITS, MEANING IN LIFE AND LIFE SATISFACTION AMONG STUDENTS

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to examine the relationship between values, personality traits, meaning in life and life satisfaction among students. In this research, a predictive model was applied with the aim of determining which of the researched variables best predict life satisfaction. The research was conducted on a sample of 243 students at the Faculty of Medicine, Faculty of Pedagogy, Faculty of Economics, Faculty of Law, Faculty of Information Sciences and Computer Engineering (FINKI) and from the Orthodox Theological Faculty in Skopje. The respondents were given the following instruments: Portrait Values Questionnaire, Hexaco Personality Inventory, Meaning in Life Scale and Life Satisfaction Scale. The regression model singles out the meaning in life, security and conscientiousness as significant predictors for life satisfaction, while conscientiousness in the predictor model has a negative direction. In the discussion, the meaning of the obtained findings is considered, as well as the shortcomings of this research are also pointed out. Additionally, recommendations are given for applying the findings in psychological practice, as well as recommendations for further research.

Keywords: *values, personality traits, meaning in life, life satisfaction*

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Introduction

Life satisfaction is a psychological construct that involves a cognitive evaluation of how content we are with the way we live our lives and our lives as a whole (Спасовски, 2012). It does not necessarily include an affective assessment of one's life, nor is it always linked to the positive emotions a person experiences. Life satisfaction is not the same as having a happy and carefree life. Shin and Johnson (1978) define life satisfaction as a global evaluation that an individual makes about his or her own life, based on personal criteria.

Recent years have seen intensive research into the mental health of adolescents. Life satisfaction is closely linked to mental health. Hence, there is interest in exploring the correlates and antecedents of life satisfaction among adolescents. Life satisfaction among adolescents is a psychological resource that facilitates adaptation throughout development, achievement of important life goals, coping with problems, self-confidence, peer acceptance, popularity, affection, romantic and other relationships (Diener & Seligman, 2002). Research indicates that life satisfaction during adolescence serves as a significant predictor of individual differences in loneliness, peer violence, self-confidence, and social relationships (Šimunović & Olčar, 2022).

One of the approaches to studying factors related to life satisfaction is the “top-down” approach (Lachmann et al., 2017), which implies examining stable personality characteristics that influence how an individuals perceive and evaluate their own quality of life, and consequently, how satisfied they are with their lives. Following this approach, this study aims to determine the predictive power of stable personality structures such as personal values, personality traits, and meaning in life in predicting life satisfaction among Macedonian adolescents

Macedonian society is largely collectivistic (Kenig, 2006), emphasizing commitment to the values, norms, and expectations of the group and local community. North Macedonia has an independent parliamentary democracy since 1991 and one of the lowest GDPs in Europe, with an unemployment rate of approximately 30% (Romanyuk, Dimitrova & Spasovski, 2014).

The study of values in this work is based on the leading theory of values today, namely the *Shalom Schwartz's Theory of Universal Values* (Schwartz, 1992, 2012), according to which values are defined as desired goals that vary in importance and act as guiding principles in a person's life. According to this theory, there are ten universal values present in different cultures:

1. Self-Direction: characterized by independence in thinking and action, freedom in choosing activities, creativity, autonomy, curiosity, and exploration.
2. Stimulation: preference for novelty, seeking excitement, pursuing challenges and variety in life.
3. Hedonism: characterized by pleasure, sensory enjoyment, and self-indulgence.
4. Achievement: relates to personal success manifested through competence according to societal standards, ambition, ability, and accomplishment.
5. Power: relates to social status, prestige, dominance, or control over others or specific resources, valuation of material goods.
6. Security: relates to safety, harmony, and stability in society, in relationships with others and oneself; preference for order and discipline.
7. Conformity: relates to refraining from activities that may disturb others or oppose social expectations and norms.
8. Tradition: relates to respect for and acceptance of cultural and religious customs; confidence that tradition in culture or religion forms the basis of personality.
9. Benevolence: relates to care and promotion of the well-being of others with whom the individual has direct contact.
10. Universalism: relates to understanding, appreciating, protecting, and enhancing the well-being of all people, no matter how different they are, as well as protecting and preserving nature.

Values are structured in relation to several higher bipolar dimensions. The first dimension is *openness to change* versus *conservation*. Values gravitating around the openness to change dimension are *self-direction and stimulation*, while values gravitating around the conservation dimension are *security, conformity, and tradition*.

The second dimension is *self-enhancement* versus *self-transcendence*. Values gravitating around the self-transcendence dimension are those values that involve helping and caring for the well-being of others, both those within the family circle and close ones (*benevolence*), as well as those who are not close to us and are different from us (*universalism*). Values that gravitate around the self-enhancement dimension include *power* and *achievement*. The value of *hedonism*

also includes elements from both the openness to change dimension and the self-enhancement dimension.

Values also differ in terms of the bipolar dimension: *focus on oneself* versus *focus on others*. Focus on oneself implies primarily a motive to regulate one's own behavior, starting from personal interests and needs. Values included here are *self-direction*, *stimulation*, *hedonism*, *achievement* and *power*. Focus on others implies putting others (family, friends, society, culture, religion) to the forefront and putting oneself in the background. Values that have this focus include *security*, *conformity*, *tradition*, *benevolence* and *universalism*.

Based on Maslow's theory of motivation, Schwartz and Bilsky (1987) distinguish between values in relation to another overarching bipolar dimension. It relates to opposing goals towards which the individual can strive: goals aimed at avoiding anxiety, preventing failure, and protecting oneself from threat, the so-called *protection motivation*, arising from deficiency needs, versus goals based on the motivation for *personal growth and development*. Within deficiency needs, values such as *security*, *conformity*, *tradition* and *power* are included, while within the need for personal growth and development enter needs such as *universalism*, *benevolence* and *self-direction*. Values such as *achievement* and *stimulation* are also located close to this group without firm and unambiguous findings.

The idea that not every value leads to a positive effect, that is, not every value can lead to increased life satisfaction, is the basis for the theoretical perspective on so-called *healthy* versus *unhealthy* values (Bilsky & Schwartz, 1994; Sagiv & Schwartz, 2000). Healthy values represent cognitive transformations of the needs for personal growth and development, while unhealthy values are cognitive transformations of deficiency needs. Therefore, the following values are considered "healthy": *universalism*, *benevolence*, *self-direction*, *stimulation* and *achievement*.

High valuation of deficiency values indicates that people feel insecure, without a sense of control over their lives or feel threatened in relation to others. Preferring values from this group is negatively associated with mental health and subjective well-being, and therefore they are called "unhealthy" values. Values such as *security*, *conformity*, *power* and *tradition* are included in "unhealthy" values.

Personality traits are defined as relatively stable patterns of behavior, thinking, and feeling (Kaprara & Cervone, 2003; McCrae & Costa, 2003, according to Parks-Leduc, Feldman & Bardi, 2015). In this work, personality traits are studied through the six-factor model of personality HEXACO (Achton & Lee, 2009). All factors in this model are bipolar, meaning they are considered as two extremes of one continuum.

The *honesty-humility* dimension encompasses sincerity, fairness, humility, absence of belief that one is entitled to special privileges, and high social status. A high score on this dimension indicates avoidance of manipulation with others for personal gain, no need to break rules, disinterest in fame and wealth, or high social status. The opposite dimension, a person with a low score on this factor, indicates that the person is prepared to be kind and polite to others, with the aim of personal benefit, prepared to break rules to gain personal profit, motivated by material wealth, and has a strong sense of personal importance.

The *emotionality* dimension relates to fearfulness, anxiety, dependence, and sentimentality. A high score on the emotionality dimension refers to a person who is afraid of physical dangers, reacts anxiously when facing stressful situations, has a high level of need for emotional support from others, experiences empathy and sentimental attachment with others. In contrast, a person with a low score on this dimension is not disturbed when facing physical danger or stress, has no need to share their concerns with others, and feels emotionally disconnected from others.

The *extraversion* dimension includes a positive self-image, self-confidence in interactions with others, sociability, and enthusiasm. A person with a high level of extraversion has positive feelings about him or herself, has high self-confidence when leading or representing a group of people, enjoys social gatherings and interactions with others, is full of enthusiasm and energy. In contrast, a person with a low level of extraversion perceives him or herself as unpopular, feels uncomfortable when in the spotlight, is uninterested in social interactions, and feels less optimistic and less enthusiastic than others.

The *agreeableness* dimension relates to forgiveness, gentleness, flexibility, and patience. A person with a high level of agreeableness tends to forgive injustices experienced, is gentle in assessing others, is willing to compromise and cooperate with others, and has a high level of self-control, including control over the emotion of anger. In contrast, a low level of this dimension has a person who remembers for a long time when someone makes a mistake, easily criticizes others, stubbornly advocates their views, and easily gets angry when they do not receive the desired treatment.

The *conscientiousness* dimension relates to effectively structuring time, industriousness, carefulness in decision-making, and a tendency towards perfectionism. A person with a high score on the conscientiousness scale organizes his time and physical surroundings well, works disciplined towards achieving his goals, strives for perfection in performing tasks, and makes careful decisions. In contrast, a person with low scores on this scale is uninterested in order in his surroundings or scheduling activities, avoids difficult tasks or challenging goals;

is satisfied with his work even when it contains mistakes; makes impulsive decisions with little thought.

The *openness to experience* dimension relates to enjoying the beauty of art and nature, curiosity about different areas of knowledge, freedom in using imagination in everyday life, and interest in unusual ideas and people. A person with a high level of openness to experience enjoys perceiving the beauty of art and nature, is open to gaining knowledge from various fields; freely uses his imagination in everyday life and is interested in unconventional ideas or people. In contrast, a person with a low score on this dimension is not impressed by works of art, has little intellectual curiosity, avoids original thinking, and is not attracted to ideas that appear unconventional.

The *meaning in life* can be defined as the awareness of order, harmony, and purpose in personal existence, striving for goals worth investing effort in, their achievement, and all this accompanied by a sense of fulfillment (Zika & Chamberlain, 1992, according to Vulić-Prtorić & Bubalo, 2006). The subjective experience of meaning in life is associated with mental and physical gains and health, while the experience of meaninglessness in life is associated with various mental problems and illnesses (Vulić-Prtorić & Bubalo, 2006). People experience meaning on an affective, cognitive, and motivational level of functioning (O'Connor & Chamberlain, 1996). At a cognitive level, research shows that meaning plays a significant role, helping a person to process the data he receives from the environment, coordinating it with his actions (Heintzelman & King, 2014).

The thesis statement in this research is: *Life satisfaction among students can be predicted on the basis of values, personality traits and meaning in life, i.e. higher scores on the values of the self-direction, stimulation, hedonism, achievement, benevolence, universalism, as well as a higher level of traits extraversion, conscientiousness, agreeableness, honesty-humility and openness to experience, and a higher level of meaning in life, predict a higher score of life satisfaction, while a higher score of values security, conformity, tradition and power or trait emotionality, as well as lower score of meaning in life, predict lower score of life satisfaction.*

Method

Sample

The research was conducted on a convenient sample of 243 students (177 female and 66 male) from the first to fourth year of study at the the University Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje. Participants were recruited from the following faculties: Faculty of Medicine, Faculty of Education, Faculty of Law,

Faculty of Economics, Faculty of Computer Science and Computer Engineering, and the Faculty of Orthodox Theology.

Instruments

Portrait Values Questionnaire

To measure values, the *Portrait Values Questionnaire* (Schwartz, 1994) was used. The instrument consists of 40 brief descriptions of personalities, which the author calls portraits. The participants are required to assess the degree to which the described person resembles them, rather than evaluating their own similarity to the described person. They respond using a six-point Likert scale, where “1” means not at all similar to me, and “6” means completely similar to me. The questionnaire is administered in two versions, for male and female students, where the difference is solely in the words determining gender. The Cronbach α -coefficients calculated based on this research for individual values are: *self-direction* 0.93; *universalism* 0.92; *benevolence* and *achievement* 0.86; *security* 0.84; *hedonism* 0.82; *stimulation* 0.79; *conformity* 0.78; *power* 0.67; and *tradition* 0.64.

HEXACO Personality Inventory

Personality traits were measured with the *HEXACO Personality Inventory* (HEXACO-PI-R, Ashton & Lee, 2009). The inventory consists of 60 items related to the six dimensions of personality: honesty-humility, emotionality, extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, openness to experience, to which responses are given on a five-point Likert scale (from “1” meaning completely inaccurate to “5” meaning completely accurate). The obtained Cronbach α coefficients, calculated based on this research, are: *emotionality* 0.70; *openness* 0.69; *extraversion*, *agreeableness*, and *conscientiousness* 0.66; and *honesty-humility* 0.65.

Meaning in Life Scale

Meaning in life was measured with the *Meaning in Life Scale*, which is actually an adapted form of the *Purpose in Life Test* (Crumbaugh & Maholick, 1996, according to Vulić-Prtorić & Bubalo, 2006). The scale contains 23 items to which responses are given on a five-point Likert scale (from “1” meaning “not at all” to “5” meaning “completely”). The Cronbach α coefficient, calculated based on this research, is 0.90.

Satisfaction with Life Scale

To measure life satisfaction, the *Satisfaction with Life Scale* (Penezić, 2006) was used. The scale has a one-factor structure and consists of 20 items (17 items refer to the assessment of global satisfaction, and 3 items refer to situational satisfaction) to which responses are given on a five-point Likert scale (from “1” meaning “strongly disagree” to “5” meaning “strongly agree”). In this research, the Cronbach α coefficient is 0.94.

Results

The relationship between variables in this study was examined through multiple linear regression to determine the contribution of each predictor variable to predicting the criterion variable. The criterion variable in this study is *life satisfaction*, and the predictor variables are the ten dimensions of basic personal values, the six dimensions of *personality traits* variable, and the meaning in life variable. A standard multiple regression was used to build the regression model, i.e. the Enter option has been used. The statistics from the conducted regression analysis are presented in Table 1 (correlation coefficient R , adjusted R^2 as a corrected measure of the coefficient of determination, change statistics, and values from the Durbin-Watson test).

Table 1.
Statistics from the multiple regression equation

R	R^2	Adj. R^2	SD	Change statistics					
				R^2 Chan.	F Change	$df1$	$df2$	Sig. F	Durbin- Watson
0,85	0,72	0,69	8,13	0,72	31,07	18	233	0,01	1,84

predictors: constant: meaning in life, emotionality, tradition, agreeableness, stimulation, openness to experience, honesty-humility, power, conscientiousness, extraversion, achievement, hedonism, security, benevolence, conformity, self-direction, universalism
criterion variable: life satisfaction

Table 2.
Testing the significance of the model

	ANOVA				
	SS	Df	MS	F	Sig
Regression	36962,51	18	2053,47	31,07	0,01
Residuals	14737,55	223	66,09		
Total	51700,05	241			

criterion variable: life satisfaction
predictors (constant): meaning in life, emotionality, tradition, agreeableness, stimulation, openness to experience, honesty-humility, power, conscientiousness, extraversion, achievement, hedonism, security, benevolence, conformity, self-direction, universalism

Based on the R^2 value shown in Table 1, it can be seen that all predictor variables together explain 69% of the variance in the criterion variable. The Durbin-Watson coefficient value allows us to conclude that the assumption of no autocorrelation of residuals is met. The values shown in Table 2 indicate that the model is statistically significant.

In Table 3, the statistics of the predictor variables are presented that enter the regression equation and define it, along with the values for the Beta ponders. Additionally, partial and semi-partial correlations are provided to determine the contribution of each predictor variable when the others are removed.

Table 3.
Statistics for predictor variables

Модел		Non-Standardized Coefficient		Standardized coefficient		Correlation		
		B	SD	Beta	T	p	Part. Corr.	Semi-part. corr.
1	Constants	7,70	7,55		1,02	0,31		
	Conformity	0,24	0,22	0,09	1,10	0,27	0,07	0,04
	Tradition	-0,13	0,16	-0,04	-0,84	0,40	-0,06	-0,03
	Benevolence	-0,20	0,24	-0,08	-0,83	0,41	-0,06	-0,03
	Universalism	-0,26	0,18	-0,16	-1,43	0,15	-0,10	-0,05
	Self-direction	-0,04	0,24	-0,02	-0,18	0,86	-0,01	-0,01
	Stimulation	0,02	0,20	0,01	0,10	0,92	0,01	0,00
	Hedonism	0,15	0,20	0,04	0,72	0,48	0,05	0,03
	Achievement	0,29	0,18	0,11	1,67	0,10	0,11	0,06
	Powe	-0,13	0,19	-0,03	-0,68	0,50	-0,05	-0,02
	Security	0,38	0,18	0,16	208	0,04	0,14	0,07
	Honesty-humility	0,15	0,09	0,06	1,59	0,11	0,11	0,06
	Emotionality	-0,05	0,08	-0,02	-0,64	0,53	-0,04	-0,02
	Extraversion	0,06	0,12	0,02	0,52	0,60	0,04	0,02
	Agreeableness	-0,08	0,10	-0,04	-0,84	0,41	-0,06	-0,03
	Conscientiousness	-0,31	0,11	-0,13	-2,95	0,01	-0,19	-0,11
	Openness to experience	0,04	0,09	0,02	0,42	0,68	0,03	0,02
	Meanig in life	0,85	0,05	0,82	17,72	0,01	0,76	0,63

Criterion variable: life satisfaction

Based on the data from Table 3, using the unstandardized coefficients, a regression equation was derived. According to the general formula for the regression equation from the statistics obtained for the predictor variables in the tested model, $Y = B_0 + B_1(X)$, the value of life satisfaction can be predicted as:

$$\text{Life satisfaction} = 7.70 + 0.85 \times \text{Meaning in life} + 0.37 \times \text{Security} - 0.31 \times \text{Conscientiousness}$$

The results indicated that a higher score in meaning in life predicts higher score in life satisfaction. Contrary to expectations, the results showed that a higher score in security predicts higher life satisfaction, and a higher score in conscientiousness predicts lower score in life satisfaction. Meaning in life emerged as the best predictor of life satisfaction, while the values of security and conscientiousness have nearly identical predictive power in predicting the life satisfaction.

Discussion

In this study, meaning in life emerged as a variable that is the best predictor of life satisfaction. This finding is congruent with findings from other studies (Steger & Frazier, 2005; Wolfram, 2022), which suggest that meaning in life is positively associated with psychological well-being and that a lack of meaning in life is associated with psychological distress (Steger et al., 2006).

Humans have a natural need to make sense of things around them and within themselves: from spontaneously and unconsciously making sense of the stimuli they perceive, to consciously and rationally making sense of their entire lives. Giving meaning to life, importance to events, and experiences enables a person to have a higher level of self-acceptance, positive self-evaluation, and self-esteem. Reflecting on the meaning of life enables the developing of a positive attitude toward oneself and one's own life. These things enable a person to more frequently experience oneself and the events that happen to him positively, which, according to the broaden-and-build theory (Fredrickson, 2003), broaden people's thought-action repertoires, building a psychological repertoire of traits and resources for the future, stimulating an upward developmental spiral, and removing the harmful effects of negative emotions, which ultimately increases life satisfaction. Under conditions where the level of meaning in life is high, the perception and experience of hardships, suffering, and frustrations are reduced, as evidenced by Frankl (Frankl, 1987) from his concentration camp experience. However, the reverse situation also applies. In conditions where a person cannot see or attribute meaning to the hardships he experiences them more unpleas-

antly. People with lower levels of meaning in life more often seek psychotherapeutic help compared to those with higher levels of meaning in their lives.

These findings can be applied in educational and counseling practice. In the process of education, it is important for students to see meaning in what they are learning, consequently, in what they read within the framework of the educational process. This is particularly important because it allows students to see different perspectives on the world, examine situations from different perspectives, better understand the meanings of different actions or events outside themselves, and thus be able to draw parallels for themselves.

Furthermore, it is important for a person to see the meaning in the activities he does. Even everyday small routine activities, if seen through an appropriate reference frame, challenge the person to a different perception of them. This frame implies linking those small activities to larger and more significant domains of the person's life. Activities organized in this way can stimulate a process in which the motive for performing a particular activity from an external source begins to change to an internal, intrinsic motive, a process of functional autonomy of motives discussed by Allport (Allport, 1958, according to Hol & Lindzi, 1978).

The obtained results regarding the predictive power of the security value indicate that for Macedonian participants, security is a particularly significant factor when it comes to their life satisfaction. This finding replicates the finding obtained from a sample of Macedonian students in 2014 (Спасовски, 2014), indicating the stability of the positive relationship between the security value and life satisfaction among Macedonian students over the years. It is a value oriented towards the group, i.e., one that relates to the socio-cultural sphere, as well as to the personal sphere. Within the socio-cultural sphere, this value refers to a preference for order and harmony, security, stability, and harmony within society. According to the higher-order dimensions within Schwartz's model of values, this value is categorized under those primarily driven by the motive for protection from threats and avoidance of anxiety.

The significance of security for individuals in their life satisfaction can be seen as an indicator that their need for security is not sufficiently or adequately met. In conditions where the need for security, which is placed low in the hierarchy of needs according to Maslow (Maslow, 1954), is not satisfied, individuals cannot focus on achieving higher needs that would enable self-actualization or the development and realization of their own potentials and capacities.

The obtained results can also be related to the perceptions of the attachment style between parents and children and its subsequent effects on interpersonal relationships that children develop. An insecure attachment style makes the

child more sensitive to signs of threat from the social environment and more oriented towards avoiding threats to protect themselves. The safer and less threatening the environment, the more secure and satisfied the child feels. Although values begin to be adopted early in childhood, preferences for different values change during psychosocial development, stabilize during adolescence, and remain relatively stable later in life. The initial experience of feeling security or insecurity is primarily experienced within the family framework, and later in school and societal contexts. Hence, interpretations relevant to the Macedonian context can arise at two levels.

The first level is the school, where for students to experience security, it is necessary that they perceive the subjects and materials they are learning as relevant and stable; they need to experience control over what happens to them in school; they should perceive assessment and reward processes as fair and consistent; they should have trust in the abilities and qualities of their teachers, support services, and school leaders; they should be aware that their parents have confidence in educational processes and the qualities of the teaching staff, as well as evaluate educational policy in society as adequate and stable. If students continuously do not experience stability in these components, their need for security is not adequately satisfied, which negatively affects their life satisfaction. This leads to conscious or unconscious tendencies for individuals to strive for greater security in order to experience a higher level of well-being and satisfaction.

The second level is societal and the degree of security it enables for individuals. A good society provides conditions for citizens to meet their needs while enabling general development (Spasovski, 2012). It is a society in which individuals experience dignity, respect, significance, feel in control of their actions as citizens, where there is justice and consistency, and where societal institutions function adequately and equally.

In the context of different attachment styles, an analogy can be drawn between the parent-child relationship and the school-student and society-citizen contexts. Viewed through this prism, the school and society serve a symbolic parental function for the individual. If schools and society provide stable and secure relationships, they enable students or citizens to adequately satisfy their need for security. Under conditions where this need is adequately met, it ceases to be a significant factor in personal life satisfaction. Thus, in such conditions, individuals can focus on higher-order needs from Maslow's hierarchy, aiming not only to protect and avoid anxiety but also to strive for values that foster personal growth and development.

The third predictor variable for life satisfaction is conscientiousness. Conscientiousness denotes a temporally stable disposition for effectively structuring time, making decisions carefully, striving for perfectionism, industriousness, and ambition. These are characteristics expected to lead to success and consequently to higher level of life satisfaction. Results obtained from the Macedonian sample show a higher presence of conscientiousness characteristics predicting lower life satisfaction. There are several possible interpretations for this finding.

Regarding ambition, it is important to consider that important prerequisites for ambition to lead an individual to success and hence life satisfaction include alignment with his abilities, their level of aspirations, realistic conditions for achieving the desired goal, as well as an appropriate balance between desired success and the sacrifices and renunciations required by the individual to achieve that success.

The first precondition stems from the degree to which individuals have a realistic self-image regarding their abilities and potential. In circumstances where there is a discrepancy between what a person wants to achieve and what he realistically can achieve, there is a high likelihood of failure. Inappropriately high ambition levels and aspirations lead to failures, which are frustrating and unpleasant experiences for individuals.

Children develop their self-image based on information they receive from significant others with whom they interact. When a parent directs his own perceptions of the child's abilities in the form of verbal messages towards the child, he essentially provides the 'material' for the child to build its self-image. Receiving positive messages enables the construction of a positive self-image. The same applies in the opposite situation. A child may remain completely unaware of certain ability unless it receives verbal feedback that it possess this ability, that it is recognized, and that it is significant. It is extremely important for the messages received to be realistic, as both underestimating and overestimating children's abilities lead to the formation of an unrealistic self-image. A realistic self-image enables the child to develop its potential in the long run. One of the key reasons for inadequate ambition, as well as for inadequate setting of levels of aspiration, is precisely the idealized image that the parent helps the child to build for itself.

Another source for forming an unrealistically high self-image can be the school. The practice that exists in Macedonian schools, until a certain age, of evaluating students descriptively with exclusively positive formulations about what the student knows and can do, can easily contribute to increasing awareness of what he has successfully mastered, without any insight into what he has failed to master at all. The school can be a source of dissatisfaction for students with high levels of conscientiousness due to inappropriate and unfair evaluation

and rewarding of students. If a student who has struggled, studied, made efforts, and exerted effort to achieve success and recognition, faces another student who has achieved the same success and the same recognition effortlessly and undeservedly, then the student experiences betrayal and consequently dissatisfaction.

An additional factor in forming realistic assessments of what and how much is needed for success is the characteristics of the time in which we live, especially in the Macedonian context. This refers to the tendency towards easily achieving of the set goals. Social media and advertisements also contribute to this, as they abound with visual material 'testifying' to the success that is easily and quickly achieved. Not only social media or advertisements, but the entire *Zeitgeist* is aimed at facilitating personal life in every possible way, which further plays a significant role in reducing the level of tolerance for frustrations experienced by individuals. Confronting reality, realizing that their ideas are not (so) easily accessible, is a cause of frustration and a decrease in life satisfaction.

Another possible reason is the lack of an identification model for how to achieve set or desired goals. This stems from generational differences in contemporary living that are clearly visible. One of the key goals of education is to adequately prepare students for later professional life. In today's conditions, this often means that teachers (and parents) are standed up the challenge of preparing generations for professions that may still not exist and for life in circumstances they themselves have not experienced, for reasons that rapid technological changes open up new opportunities, professions, and change society faster than ever in human history.

The topic of realistic goal-setting and levels of aspiration is further related to the topic of perfectionism as another characteristic of conscientiousness. Perfectionism as a tendency towards thoroughness and towards the complete execution of tasks, for the individual can be functional, i.e. desirable characteristic, or dysfunctional, i.e. undesirable characteristic. Namely, the individual can experience it as a positive aspect of their personality that enables them to achieve excellent results, or as a negative aspect that prevents them from being satisfied with the outcome of their actions and consequently contributes to their higher life satisfaction. Functional perfectionism, also referred to as 'healthy' perfectionism, leads to successful achievement of high expectations, to top achievements, and is accompanied by low negative self-evaluation (Burnam et al., 2013). Unlike it, dysfunctional perfectionism is characterized by setting unrealistically high standards for achievement and is accompanied by critically tuned self-evaluation (Richardson & Gradisar, 2020), which is accompanied by anxiety, depression, negative affects, and lower levels of subjective well-being (Wigert et al., 2012).

Based on the structure of the sample and the gender imbalance, the possibility of generalizing the findings is limited. In future research, it is necessary to include a larger number of students, students from more study groups from different faculties, as well as to gender balance in the sample. In future research, it is desirable to verify the correlation of life satisfaction with character qualities, emotional intelligence, and psychological resilience, as well as to verify the predictive power of these variables in predicting life satisfaction among adolescents.

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ВРЕДНОСТИ, ЦРТИ НА ЛИЧНОСТА, СМИСЛА ВО ЖИВОТОТ И ЗАДОВОЛСТВО ОД ЖИВОТОТ КАЈ СТУДЕНТИТЕ

Ана Ѓорѓевиќ

Кратка содржина

Целта на ова истражување беше да се испита поврзаноста помеѓу вредностите, цртите на личноста, смислата во животот и задоволството од животот кај студентите. Во ова истражување беше применет предикторски модел со цел да се утврди кои од истражуваните варијабли најдобро го предвидуваат задоволството од животот. Истражувањето беше спроведено на примерок од 243 студенти од Медицинскиот факултет, Педагошкиот факултет, Економскиот факултет, Правниот факултет, Факултетот за информатички науки и компјутерско инженерство (ФИНКИ) и од Православниот богословски факултет во Скопје. На испитаниците им беа зададени следниве инструменти: Прашалник за портретирање на вредностите, Инвентарот на личност ХЕКСАКО, Скала за смисла во животот и Скала за задоволство од животот. Регресивниот модел како значајни предиктори за задоволство од животот ги издвои смислата во животот, сигурноста и совесноста, при што совесноста во предикторскиот модел има негативен предзнак. Во дискусијата се согледува значењето на добиените наоди, но, се укажува и на недостатоците од ова истражување. Дополнително, дадени се препораки за примена на наодите во психолошката пракса, како и препораки за понатамошни истражувања.

Клучни зборови: *вредности, црти на личноста, смисла во животот, задоволство од животот*

