Prediction of social well-being on the basis of value orientations of students of different professional direction

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Abstract

The aim of the research was to determine whether there is a possibility of prediction of well-being based on value orientations of students of different professional orientations. In addition, we wanted to examine the contribution of sociodemographic factors (material status and age of respondents) to social well-being. The sample included 400 students, 200 students from the Faculty of Philosophy in Kosovska Mitrovica and 200 students from the Technical Faculty in Kosovska Mitrovica. The research used the following instruments: Keyes Scale of Social Well-being, Schwarz Scale of Universal Values and Socio-Demographic Questionnaire. The results show that there is a possibility of prediction of social well-being of students of different professional orientations based on value orientations. Through the value of Security, we can explain 38.6% of the variance of social well-being for students of humanities, while for the students of technical faculties the predictors of social well-being represent the values of Selfdirection, Universalism, Hedonism and Tradition that explain 55.9% variance. The correlation between the material condition and the age of the respondents with social well-being was not established.

Keywords: Value; well-being; SDT

Introduction

The purpose of this work was to analyze the relationships between personal values and well-being. This study addresses a research between two hypotheses: a healthy values perspective and the value-environment congruence perspective, the first of which will be further developed in this work.

The relation between values and well-being can be observed from the perspective of healthy values (Sagiv, Roccas, Hazan, 2004). Furthermore, by taking into account the theory of self-determination (Deci & Ryan, 2000) where the main assumption is that personal values and intrinsic motivation reflect on self-actualization and psychological growth, and therefore, positively affect accomplishment. On the contrary, extrinsic values focus on obtaining approval, admiration and praise from others, and a positive impact on well-being is weaker than in personal values. Various studies confirm this hypothesis (Kassser & Ahuvia, 2002; Vansteenkiste et al., 2006). Authors (Jensen and Bergin, 1988) appointed the Self-direction, Benevolence and Universalism as "healthy" values. Additionally, values such as Conformism, Tradition, Security and Power belong to "unhealthy values" (Sagiv & Schwartz, 2000). The study (Sortheix, 2014) examined long-term predictors of wellbeing at work and proposed a conceptualization of career values based on self-determination theory's ideas of autonomous versus controlled sources of motivation. This study shows that the relationship between individuals' values and well-being is influenced by social groups to which they belong. Researchers have provided vast evidence showing that giving priority to such intrinsic pursuits over extrinsic ones contributes to people's well-being (Kasser, 2002). The effect is found even in contexts which should support these values, such as business universities (Vansteenkiste, Duriez, Simons, & Soenens, 2006). Sagiv and Schwartz (2000) reasoned that students, who hold values congruent with their major, would gain approval for their values as well as for value-congruent behaviours. Sagiv and Schwartz (2000) showed that the context offered by students' majors moderated the relationship between values and well-being in student samples. The value of power attends to characteristics of careers in business while Benevolence responds to careers in psychology (Gandal, Roccas, Sagiv, & Wrzesniewski, 2005). Thus, Sagiv and Schwartz (2000) suggested that when the environment supported and encouraged certain types of values (e.g., power in business careers), then adhering to these values brought about positive outcomes in terms of personal happiness. Specifically, they found that Power values were related to higher well-being only among business students, and Benevolence values were related to higher wellbeing only among psychology students.

The aim of the research was to determine whether there is a possibility of predicting well-being based on the values of students of different professional orientations. In addition, we wanted to examine the contribution of socio-demographic factors (financial background and age of respondents) to the social well-being.

Method

The research was conducted on a convenient sample of students at the University of Priština. The sample included 400 students, 200 students from the Faculty of Philosophy in Kosovska Mitrovica and 200 students from the Faculty of Technical Sciences in Kosovska Mitrovica, age 18 to 34. Of the total of 400 subjects, there were 139 male and 261 female respondents, with average age of 21.48 (SD = 2.48).

Instruments

To measure the individual values of students, Schwarz's Scale of Universal Values was used (Schwartz, 1992). This scale consists of fifty-six items and it measures eleven domains of value. Cronbach's alpha for the domains of value varies from .61 for Tradition to .75 for Universalism

(Schwartz, 1992). Social well-being is estimated by the shortened Keyes' Scale of Social Well-being. The scale consists of five different dimensions: acceptance of others, social actualization, contribution to society, social coherence and social integration. Congruence for the scale of social well-being is 0.81 (Keyes, 2002). *The socio-demographic questionnaire* (financial background and age of respondents) was designed for the research purposes.

Results

The results showed that there is a possibility of prediction of social well-being of students of different professional orientations based on value orientation. Through the value of Security (β = .372), we can explain 38.6% of the variance of social well-being for students of social sciences, while for the students of technical sciences predictors of social well-being represent the values of Self-direction (β = .914), Universalism (β = .349), Hedonism (β = -.223) and Tradition (β = -.264) that explain 55.9% variance.

Table 1: The results of the regression analysis of the social well-being prediction for students of different science fields

	Social sciences:		Technical sciences:	
	R2 = .386, p = .006		R2 = .559, p = .000	
Predictors	β	p	β	p
Benevolence	.133	.532	090	.558
Universalism	155	.373	.349	.007
Self-direction	007	.973	.914	.000
Stimulation	048	.756	165	.157
Hedonism	.005	.973	223	.057
Achievement	.322	.064	264	.066
Power	051	.719	.008	.940
Security	.372	.028	153	.289
Tradition	251	.082	264	.037
Conformity	.126	.474	.224	.111
Spirituality	.150	.237	163	.206

The relationship between socio-demographic indicators and social well-being has been investigated using the Pearson linear correlation coefficient. The correlation between the financial background and the age of the respondents with social well-being was not established.

Discussion and conclusion

Summarizing the results of the research, we observe that value orientations explain 38.6% of the variance of social well-being within students of social sciences, while 55.9% of the well-being variance for the students of technical sciences. Socio-demographic characteristics, such as the financial background and age of the respondents, do not represent significant correlates of social well-being.

Based on the results of linear regression it can be concluded that the Security predicts social well-being for students of the Faculty of Philosophy. Universalism, Self-direction, Hedonism and Tradition are also predictors of social well-being but within the group of technical science students.

As it can be seen from Table 1, Hedonism and Tradition are negatively correlated with social well-being, while other values correlate positively with social well-being.

These results are partly in line with the assumption of healthy and unhealthy values based on the Theory of selfdetermination.

Furthermore, the important implication of this study is finding regarding the value correlates of social well-being. On our sample of technical science students, Self-direction positively correlates with social well-being, unlike students of Iranian University (Joshanlooa, Ghaedi, 2009) where there is no correlation between Self-direction and social well-being. In addition, Security and Universalism are significantly correlated with social well-being.

One other noticeable finding is that in the present sample, security was correlated positively with social well-being. This is inconsistent with Bilsky and Schwartz's (1994) hypothesis that security value (along with conformity and power values) represents deficiency needs and therefore priority given to this value is expected to correlate negatively with well-being. Yet, tradition value was negatively correlated with social well-being and should be considered socially unhealthy. It should be noted that Sagiv and Schwartz's (2000) results also showed that associations of well-being with power, security and conformity values were weak or inconsistent.

Some findings are inconsistent (while some others are consistent) with Kasser and Ryan (1996) hypothesis that pursuing extrinsic, materialistic values relates to poorer wellbeing, and pursuing intrinsic values leads to higher wellbeing. As Sagiv and Schwartz (2000) suggest self-direction, benevolence and universalism values are intrinsic and the power value is extrinsic. Finding that self-direction and universalism values had a significant relation to social wellbeing in this sample is consistent with this hypothesis. While for Iranian students, Universalism was negatively related to psychological well-being and Self-direction showed a rather mixed pattern of associations with different aspects of wellbeing.

All in all, this research is not enough to clarify whether the results are more in favor of the Theory of self-determination or the congruence hypothesis. Some of the limitations of this study were that we did not include students of other faculties such as medicine, economics, law, than universities in other cities as well as other aspects of well-being.

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The correlates of loneliness among young people

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Abstract

Loneliness is a major problem in many countries, which is why the increasingly ubiquitous phenomenon of one's own social position security loss and feelings of separation from others protrude. During adolescence, if friends do not provide love and support, this leads to disappointment, dissatisfaction and loneliness. Self-efficacy involves assessing one's own abilities in dealing with different challenges, whereas in different aspects of life low self-esteem and dissatisfaction can lead to suppression and loneliness. This research intended to examine the connection of self-esteem, self-efficacy, life satisfaction with the loneliness of young people, as well as the predictive value of the mentioned variables for loneliness. The research included N=1172 subjects ages 16 to 19 (52.9 female) from the area of northeastern Bosnia. Young people have not shown a higher loneliness level, girls acquaint lesser loneliness than boys while it was not found in relation to the age and the environment of young people. There was a significant negative correlation of satisfaction with life, self-esteem and selfefficacy, and these predictors explain 35.8% of the variance of the criteria.

Keywords: loneliness, self-efficacy, self-esteem, life satisfaction, young people

Introduction

Loneliness is a painful and negative experience that is an outcome of a person's social relations disability and it is very subjective (Lacković-Grgin, 2008). The literature states that "loneliness" and "solitude" are two separate, but interconnected phenomena. According to the same author, solitude is perceived as pleasant, healthy and desirable, because it implies freedom, fulfilment and calm, unlike loneliness, which is perceived as coercion, emptiness and anxiety, and as such - unpleasant, undesirable and painful. Variables that determine the quality and quantity of social relationships - the number of close friends, the quality of friendly relationships, and reciprocity in relationships, social support, social skills and strategies are among the most important correlates of loneliness (Medvedev, Keresteš, 2009). According to Weiss (1973), loneliness is not only a function of personal and situational factors, but is created as a product of a combined action of these factors (Lacković-Grgin, Nekić, & Penezić, 2009).

Loneliness is most identifiable in adolescence, which largely attributes to the impact of major developmental changes that mark it (Goossens, 2006). According to Berk (2008), for example, young people are prone to imagining perfect social relationships that can make them vulnerable to shortcomings in current relationships.

Self-esteem is a central aspect of psychological functioning during adolescence (Moksnes, Moljord, Espnes, & Byrne, 2010), and it is emphasized that the level of self - esteem affects the various domains of life (Connor, Poyrazli, Ferrer-Wreder, & Grahame, 2004). Self-efficacy is an important determinant of interpersonal and intrapersonal functioning, which is extremely important in adolescence. Numerous studies reveal the importance of life satisfaction in all life phases. According to Ozben (2013), individual differences in life satisfaction in adolescents can predict important life outcomes as well *as loneliness*. Therefore, in this paper, a special emphasis is on the understanding of the connection of loneliness with self-esteem, self-efficacy and life satisfaction as important determinants of the psychological functioning of young people.

Method

This paper focuses on examining the relationship of loneliness with self-esteem, self-efficacy and life satisfaction in young people, and examining differences in gender, age and the environment. The survey included 1172 adolescents from secondary schools (52.9% female) from the Tuzla Canton (B&H) area. The average age of the adolescents is M=17.02 (SD=.99). Measurement instruments used: The scale of loneliness (Bezinovic, 1988) ($\alpha=.875$), Scale of self-esteem (Rosenberg, 1965) ($\alpha=.796$), Scale of self-efficiency (Ivanov & Penezic, 1998) ($\alpha=.882$), Scale of general satisfaction (Penezić, 1996) ($\alpha=.924$) and sociodemographic questionnaire.

Results

The mean of the scale of loneliness, whose results can range from 18 to 90, lies in M = 38.68 (SD = 11.95), which indicates that adolescents (on average) achieve slightly lower results on this scale. Since asymmetry data (Sk = .304) indicate a positive asymmetry, which, as an additional indicator, indicates that most results are in the lower-score zone.

The results of the study show that girls are less lonely compared to boys ($M_m = 36.26$, SD = 11.68, $M_f = 41.41$, SD = 11.67); t(1170) = 7.53, p < .001. There are not differences in age (F(3, 1168) = .558, p = .643).

Young people from the rural environment are somewhat lonelier, but these differences are not statistically significant (F(2, 1169) = .417; p = .659).

Loneliness is in high correlation with life satisfaction (r = -.524; p < .001) and self-esteem (r = -.481; p < .001), while with self-efficiency, in medium-intensity correlation (r = -.481)

-.385, p < .001) (according to Cohen, 1988). Regression analysis results showed that self-esteem, self-efficacy and life satisfaction, as predictors, have a significant negative contribution ($\beta_1 = .335$, $\beta_2 = .275$, $\beta_3 = .135$, p < .001) explaining the variance of loneliness (35.8%). Multiple correlation coefficient of all predictors with the criterion is (R = .60; F(3, 1168) = 218.90, p < .001). Hierarchical regression analysis results showed that variables entered at Step 1 (differences in age, gender and differences of living in the urban/rural area) explain 4.7% the variance of loneliness. After entry of the Self-esteem, Self-efficacy and Life satisfaction scale at Step 2, the total variance explained by the model as a whole was 38.3%, (F(6, 1165) = 120.67, p < .001).

Conclusions and discussion

Based on the results of some researches (Goossens, 2006; Brage, Meredith, & Woodward, 1993, Klarin, 2006), a greater degree of loneliness in young people was not found in this paper. The results in this paper coincide to the research conducted by Medvedev, & Keresteš (2009) and Neto & Barros (2000) which also did not find a higher degree of loneliness among young people. The reasons for such results lie in the fact that friendships in the adolescent period are more stable, and the integration into the community reduces loneliness. The increasingly frequent use of the internet leads to young people creating numerous virtual friendships, which can reduce the sense of loneliness.

Our results on the higher loneliness of young men are consistent with other research. (Chipuer & Pretty 2000; Klarin, 2002, 2004; Uruk & Demir, 2003). It is possible that these results are due to more developed social skills in girls, given the link between social skills and loneliness. According to Klarin, Proroković, Šimić-Šašić (2010), girls show greater satisfaction with the friendship quality than boys and significantly lower level of social loneliness. According to Medvedev & Keresteš (2009), males have less developed strategies for dealing with loneliness.

Differences in loneliness considering age were not determined as significant in this study, which conforms to some research (eg. Klarin, 2004; Mahon et al., 2007; Neto & Barros, 2000). Such findings could be explained by the possible achievement of stabilization in some aspects of the self and their lower dynamics. Nevertheless, as some studies have shown that older adolescents are lonelier than younger ones (eg Brage & Merdith, 1993; Chipuer & Pretty, 2000), it is possible that the results of our research have been affected by a small difference in age among the participants. In connection with this, further research should examine possible differences in samples with wider age span.

When it comes to the difference in loneliness in relation to the living environment, there was no significant difference, which is consistent with previous research (eg. Marić, 2017). This suggests that regardless of the greater possibilities for establishing social contacts in urban environments, it appears that more important mobility of people and the quality of interactions from the availability of contacts and their

frequency (according to Jones et al., 1985; Jones, 1981; Jackson et al., 2000).

Self-esteem, self-efficacy and life satisfaction have proven to be significant correlates of loneliness, and they explain a significant part of the loneliness variance. These results are consistent with the results of Penezic (1999); Lacković-Grgin et al. (1998b); McWhirter (1997); Brage & Meredith (1994) that loneliness is negatively linked to self-esteem and life satisfaction (Penezić, 1999; Lacković-Grgin & Sorić, 1999), and with a measure of self-efficacy (Ivanov et al., 1998; Brennen-McNulty, Ross, & Burgess, 2003). An explanation of the relationship of the above variables suggests that these three predictors can influence the emergence of loneliness by acting on the social network of a person. Lower self-esteem, satisfaction and self-efficacy individuals can think that others have no high opinion of them; they feel deprived and rarely initiate social contacts, which can lead to a sense of loneliness. The explanation is consistent with the research by Levin & Stokes (1986).

Life satisfaction, self-esteem and self-efficacy are important psychological resources that can contribute to loneliness reduction among young people, as confirmed by this research.

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