

DIVERSITY OF PERSONAL RESOURCES VS. THE QUALITY OF LIFE OF STUDENTS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION IN WARSAW

The quality of life vs. personal resources

MARIA ANNA TUROSZ

The Josef Pilsudski University of Physical Education in Warsaw, Faculty of Physical Education and Sport in Biała Podlaska, Department of Psychology

Mailing address: Maria Anna Turosz, Faculty of Physical Education and Sport, Department of Psychology,
2 Akademicka Street, 21-500 Biała Podlaska, tel.: +48 83 3428778, fax: +48 83 3428800,
e-mail: anna.turosz@awf-bp.edu.pl

Abstract

Introduction. The aim of the paper was to determine the level of diversity in selected personal resources and deficits of students of the Faculty of Physical Education and Sport (FPES) of the University of Physical Education in Warsaw, who exhibit diversity in the level of their quality of life. **Material and methods.** 205 persons participated in the study. By means of the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS), the level of the respondents' quality of life was determined. Next, the diversity of personal resources level and deficits in relation to the diverse level of life were defined. Personal resources and deficits were determined by means of the following research methods: Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS), Personality Inventory (NEO-FFI), Hope for Success Questionnaire (KNS), Generalised Self-Efficacy Scale (GSES), Life Orientation Test (LOT-R), Beck Depression Inventory (BDI), Value Crisis Questionnaire (KKW). **Results.** High level of the quality of life was determined in one out of four students. The academic youth characterised by high level of the quality of life were more extrovert, optimistic, success driven and self-assured. On the other hand, they exhibited low level of neuroticism, value crisis and depressive disorders. **Conclusions.** The academic youth ought to be supported in their search for values and the meaning of life by modifications in curricula so as to actively stimulate the development of students' personal resources co-determining their high quality of life.

Key words: the quality of life, personal resources, deficits, physical education students

Introduction

Positive psychology measures and nurtures the best values in human life. The fundamental goal of positive psychology is to foster the development of strengths in humans, their values and virtues, to give the opportunity for a person to live their life to the fullest, to develop and to perfect oneself in pursuit of happiness [1, 2]. Positive psychologists do not deny the existence of deficits and disorders. However, they believe that one ought to focus on the positive aspects of human functioning and ought to develop social and individual resources [3].

The quality of life is a term whose origins go back to economy and the term's further development is connected with medicine and psychology. Although researchers have been interested in the quality of life for more than 30 years, the definition of the term, one which would transcend its interdisciplinary character, is still to be presented [4, 5, 6].

Psychology understands the quality of life as satisfaction with one's life, the satisfaction being a result of an assessment and valuation of various spheres of life and life as a whole. The result of the assessment can have a more cognitive character. Therefore, we can measure the quality of life by the feeling of satisfaction. The result can also belong to the category of emotions/experiences. In such case, we can rather talk about the level of satisfaction with various spheres of life and life as a whole [7].

Oleś [4] states that the following terms are synonymous with the quality of life: satisfaction with life, happiness, welfare, health status, living conditions, and also, the subjective quality of life, subjective welfare, psychological welfare.

When studying the quality of life, a subjective evaluation of life is carried out. Simultaneously, internal and external determinants of the quality of life are searched for. In main study models, the determinants are grouped in 4 categories: living conditions and chance events, personality traits, external factors, personal resources [8]. The present paper focuses on the significance of personal resources.

The term "personal resources", just as the term "the quality of life" is interdisciplinary, and even multidisciplinary. Hobfoll [op. cit. 7] – the author of Conservation of Resources Theory, understands resources as objects, conditions, personal possessions and forms of energy which are significant for experience or serve as a means of obtaining objects possessing the significance. The most common classifications of resources include the following spheres of human functioning: biological, psychological, social and spiritual [9].

Personal resources and deficits, which are important from the point of view of human health and illnesses analysis, also constitute the basis of the high level of the quality of life. People actively strive to obtain, maintain, protect and promote personal resources, because by means of these resources they are able to change reality making it more satisfactory. The quality of life is contained in everyday experience – modification of vital personal objectives is closely related to the modification of subjective meaning of the quality of life [10].

When discussing the state of research related to the quality of life of PE students in Poland, it ought to be noted that the issue has not generated wide interest among researchers. The results of the study carried out among the students of the University of Physical Education in Warsaw determined among others: per-

sonal determinants of satisfaction with life as regards freshman PE students [11], the importance of contentment with the fulfilment of partial satisfaction as regards the high quality of students' lives [12], psychological personal resources important for the quality of life of highly qualified athletes [13], personal resources and deficits important for students' quality of life [14].

The aim of the paper is to establish diversity in the level of selected personal resources and deficits among freshman students of the University of Physical Education in Warsaw from the Faculty of Physical Education and Sport, who exhibit a diverse level of the subjective quality of life.

Material and methods

The study was carried out among 205 freshman students of the FPES in Białą Podlaska (44 women and 161 men). At the 1st stage of the study, the obtained results were grouped according to the revealed level of the quality of life i.e. low, medium, high. At the 2nd stage, differences in the level of personal resources and deficits of the respondents in relation to the represented level of the quality of life were determined.

The study utilised the following research techniques (all of them possess satisfactory psychometric features):

1. Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) by Diner et al. [op. cit. 15] determining a general evaluation of the quality of life in relation to the selected criteria. The scale consists of 5 items which the respondent evaluates by grading them 1 to 7 (1 – completely disagree, 7 – completely agree). The result of the evaluation is a general indicator of satisfaction with life.
2. Personality Inventory (NEO-FFI) by Costy and Mc Crae [op. cit. 16] characterising the structure of personality in accordance with Five Factor Model. The questionnaire consists of 60 items, self-reporting in character, whose accuracy in relation to him or herself the respondent evaluates on a five-point scale. The items constitute five bipolar factors: neuroticism, extroversion, openness to experiences, amicability, conscientiousness.
3. Generalised Self-Efficacy Scale (GSES) by Schwarzer et al. [op. cit. 15], which evaluates the strength of an individual's conviction as regards the person's ability to cope with difficult situations and obstacles. The scale consists of 10 items.
4. Life Orientation Test (LOT-R) by Scheier et al. [op. cit. 15] which characterizes the level of generalized expectation of positive events (optimism). The test consists of 10 items. By means of a 5 point scale, the respondent evaluates the accuracy of each item as regards him or herself.
5. Hope for Success Questionnaire (KNS) by Łaguna et al. [17], which pertains to the diagnosis of twofold beliefs regarding the conviction that one will achieve success (strong will) and that one possesses particular essential competences in order to achieve success (solution-finding skills). The questionnaire consists of two subscales which comprise 12 items in total. Respondents mark their answers by means of an 8 point scale.
6. Beck Depression Inventory (BDI) [op. cit. 15] consisting of 21 items. Each item is evaluated according to intensity of symptoms on a 0 to 3 scale. From each item, a respondent selects an answer which best describes their state in the particular period of time (in the present study it was the previous month). The results of the inventory are regarded as symptoms of depressive disorders and not as clinical diagnosis of depression.
7. Value Crisis Questionnaire (KKW) by Oleś [18] determines the importance of the system of values in a personality and

informs about the existence and intensification of difficulties or disorders in valuation in the respondent. The questionnaire consists of 4 subscales (24 items): difficulties in ordering a system of values, the feeling of the loss of values, disintegration of valuation and the feeling of unfulfilment of values. The respondent chooses one out of three answers per item.

In order to define statistical differences, as an equivalent of the one-way ANOVA, the non-parametric ANOVA Kruskal-Wallis (H) test was utilised. Next, in order to obtain information on intra-group differences, Tukey's Honestly Significant Differences test (post-hoc) was implemented.

Results

When characterising the level of the students' quality of lives, it was determined that almost half of them were only averagely satisfied with their lives. On the other hand, one out of four respondents, in many respects, considered their life to be close to perfect, have mostly achieved what they hoped for and would change little if given the opportunity.

The analysis of differences in particular personal resources and deficits indicates that the difference is of particular importance in relation to respondents' high or low level of the quality of life (Tab. 1).

Table 1. The diversity of personal resources and deficits of freshman PE students of the University of Physical Education in Warsaw, the Faculty of Physical Education and Sport in Białą Podlaska, who exhibit diverse level of the quality of life (n=205)

Personal resources and deficits	Level of the quality of life			Kruskal-Wallis Test	Significance of intra-group diversity Tukey's Test
	Low (L) (average rank)	Medium (M) (average rank)	High (H) (average rank)		
Neuroticism	126.80	102.63	70.59	26.28***	L>H*** L>M* M>H**
Extroversion	83.17	100.39	121.15	11.98**	H>L**
Openness to experiences	97.49	100.17	106.13	0.65	
Amicability	88.91	100.80	114.32	5.36	
Conscientiousness	92.40	99.21	113.19	3.73	
Hope for success /problem solving/	83.15	98.62	127.94	16.91***	H>L*** H>M**
Hope for success /perseverance/	73.33	104.67	128.30	24.99***	H>L***
Hope for success /general score/	79.54	101.57	126.85	18.20***	H>L*** H>M**
Optimism	75.14	96.10	128.04	24.02***	H>L*** H>M**
Self-efficacy	84.22	103.96	112.13	7.04*	H>L*
Value Crisis /lack of value hierarchy/	130.86	95.78	73.23	29.07***	L>H*** L>M***
Value Crisis /loss of values/	117.99	97.49	84.47	11.33**	L>H**
Value Crisis /disintegration of valuation/	122.25	91.29	90.11	13.24**	L>H** L>M**
Value Crisis /lack of fulfillment of values/	125.61	96.71	77.43	21.63***	L>H***
Value Crisis /general score/	131.17	94.25	75.43	27.63***	L>H*** L>M***
Depressive Disorders	129.92	104.12	65.90	33.80***	L>H*** L>M* M>H***

* p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

Male and female students exhibiting high level of the quality of life were the most extrovert (H=11.98; p<0.01), thus open to new people and contacts; sociable, cordial, assertive. They were characterised by optimism and cheerful mood.

The next resource essential for the high quality of life is the hope for success. Respondents exhibiting the highest level of hope for success, unsurprisingly, were characterised by the high quality of life (H=18.20; p<0.001).

Among all respondent groups, they were the ones exhibiting relatively constant belief that they could find effective solutions to problems (H=16.91; p<0.001) and that they possess enough determination and skills to overcome difficulties and obstacles on their way to success (H=24.99; p<0.001).

Researches show that optimistic attitude as regards oneself and the world favoured high level of the quality of life (H=24.02; p<0.001). Male and female students who displayed high quality of life, as regards other groups, were able to overcome difficulties and take actions.

Male and female students manifesting high quality of life, differed, in a statistically vital manner, as regards self-efficacy and effectiveness ($H=7.04$; $p<0.05$). Such students were convinced that they can efficiently cope with various situations, which promoted consistent pursuit of objectives.

Male and female students exhibiting a high level of neuroticism were, unsurprisingly, characterised by low level of the quality of life ($H=24.50$; $p<0.001$). These students were emotionally unstable, more prone to experiencing negative emotions i.e. rage, guilt, fear. They were characterized by low resistance to stress and low self-esteem.

Value crisis was the next deficit which diversified respondent groups in a statistically vital manner ($H=27.63$; $p<0.001$). The total score for the value crisis consists of the following four subscales: lack of hierarchy of values, the loss of values, disintegration of valuation and the feeling of unfulfilment of values.

Male and female students displaying low level of the quality of life were characterised by the lowest scores in all the subscales in relation to the other two respondent groups. This underlies the fact that these students had the most difficulties in determining core values and their ordering ($H=29.07$; $p<0.001$). In addition, these students did not possess prized values and experienced lack of role models ($H=11.33$; $p<0.01$). Moreover, this respondent group was characterised by the greatest disintegration of valuation, which translated itself into the discrepancy between values recognised and implemented in life, which in turn was the source of discomfort and low evaluation of one's own life ($H=13.24$; $p<0.01$). The high level of lack of opportunities for fulfilment of the recognised values triggered anxiety and the belief in underachievement of vital objectives of life ($H=21.63$; $p<0.001$).

Persons manifesting low level of the quality of life, among all respondent groups, most frequently exhibited various levels of depressive disorders ($H=33.80$; $p<0.001$).

Discussion

The level of the quality of life of FPES in Biała Podlaska freshman students was compared with the quality of life of students constituting a norm group which emerged while adapting the American Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) to Polish conditions. The respondents' evaluation was less favourable in this comparison as merely one out of four of them displayed high quality of life. In the norm group, one out of three people expressed their subjective satisfaction with life [15].

Neuroticism and extrovertism are the inborn features which largely influence a person's inclination towards experiencing satisfaction with life [8]. It is noteworthy that neuroticism, just as value crisis and depressive disorders, are characterised as defects and deficits which decrease stress resistance thus becoming risk factors [7] and factors contributing to experiencing low quality of life.

Neuroticism, defined as a lack of emotional balance, does not contribute to establishing proper human relations, it triggers the intensification of depression and negative emotions thus bringing about lack of satisfaction with one's own life. A higher level of depressive moods induces a decrease in the feeling of satisfaction and complacency [19] as proven by the present study. Anxiety, as a state, has got negative influence upon mental health and the quality of life, which was corroborated by research carried out among Turkish students [20].

Australian research results indicate that self-esteem and depression are the most crucial predictors of satisfaction with life [8]. The results of the research strongly acknowledge the statement because the respondents exhibiting low level of the quality of life differed in statistically vital manner both from

groups displaying high and medium quality of life level as regards depressive disorders and value crisis as well.

Oleś [18] demonstrates that with regard to the evaluation of the quality of life, a system of values plays an essential role. Values are strongly linked with the development of personality, they have got considerable influence upon mental health of an individual. Values create an individual hierarchy of values becoming a motivational factor for the fulfilment of an individual's objectives. If a particular value is of importance in a person's axiological structure, fulfilment of values facilitates the process of discovery of the meaning of life [21]. Moreover, the meaning of life is an underlying factor of the high level of the quality of life, which was confirmed in research among physiotherapy and public health students [22].

We are witnessing the collapse of traditional values in almost every sphere of life [23]. Therefore, it does not come as a surprise that the academic youth who experience value crisis also suffer mental disintegration. Values give life a meaning – their lack, disorganisation, chaos, trigger feelings of low quality of life, which this study seems to have proven.

The satisfied have got considerably different personality from the unhappy: the former are less neurotic, more extrovert, open, amicable and conscientious [19]. The notion accurately reflects the results of the study regarding differences in the level of personal resources in the research groups. Indeed, male and female freshman students exhibiting high level of the quality of life were: more cheerful, open and optimistic, were able to solve problems efficiently, had strong will, were convinced that they are efficient in reaching their own objectives and they lived with the hope for success. The coexistence of these features does not come as a surprise when we take into consideration the fact that the majority of psychological resources remain in close relationship with one another.

Extrovertism and low level of neuroticism are significant indicators of satisfaction with life. Self-esteem, on the other hand, can be a factor modifying the relationship, which was proven by research conducted among Iranian students [24].

Optimism reflected in success-driven mindset, viewing failures as temporary and dependent on external factors favours the high level of the quality of life [7, 8, 19], which was acknowledged by the results of the previously mentioned researches.

According to Koziński [25], hope, understood as emotion, conviction, virtue and cultural phenomenon, is vital for a person and constitutes a sort of impetus making his or her actions more dynamic. Students with high level of hope achieve much better results in tests of knowledge, are more active and dynamic, more task-oriented, experience less stress and anxiety which undoubtedly facilitates satisfaction with life.

To sum up, it must be noted that results of the previously mentioned researches cannot be generalized and applied to the whole population of PE students in Poland.

Conclusion

The academic youth ought to be supported in their search for values and the meaning of life by modifications in curricula so as to actively stimulate students in the development of their personal resources which codetermine the high level of the quality of life.

Acknowledgements

The study was carried out in the framework of research project of Faculty of Physical Education and Sport in Biała Podlaska, Józef Piłsudski University of Physical Education in Warsaw – DS.117 – financed by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education.

Literature

1. Seligmann, M.E.P. (2005). Positive psychology. In J. Czapinski (Ed.), *Positive psychology. Study of happiness, health, strength and man's virtues* (pp. 359-379). Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN. [in Polish]
2. Kobau, R., Seligmann M.E.P, Petersom Ch., Diener E., Zack M.M., Chapman D. et al. (2001). Mental health promotion in public health: Perspectives and strategies from positive psychology. *Am. J. Public Health* 101, 8-19.
3. Gulla, B. & Tucholska K. (2007). Positive psychology: scientific-research and application aims and the way of their realization. In P. Francuz & W. Otrębski (Eds.), *Studies of psychology at KUL* (pp. 133-152). Lublin: Wydawnictwo KUL. [in Polish]
4. Oleś, M. (2010). Theoretical models of quality of life of children and youth: comparison. *Psychologia Jakości Życia* 9(2), 267-288. [in Polish]
5. Kochman, D. (2007). Quality of life. Theoretical analysis. *Zdrowie Publiczne* 117(2), 242-248. [in Polish]
6. Trzebiatowski, J. (2011). Quality of life in the perspective of social and medical sciences – classification of definitions. *Hygeia Public Health* 46(1), 25-31. [in Polish]
7. Heszen, I. & Sęk H. (2007). *Health psychology*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN. [in Polish]
8. Ogińska-Bulik, N. & Juczyński Z. (2008). Personal determinants of life satisfaction. In I. Heszen & J. Życińska (Eds.), *Health psychology. In the search for positive inspirations* (pp. 89-102). Warszawa: Wydawnictwo SWPS. [in Polish]
9. Chodkiewicz, J.(2011). To struggle against the world. The meaning of personal resources. Retrieved September 10th, 2011, from www.psychologia.net.pl/artykul.php?level=136. [in Polish]
10. Dziurawicz-Kozłowska, A. (2002). Around the quality of life definition. *Psychologia Jakości Życia* 2, 77-99. [in Polish]
11. Turosz, M.A. & Bochenek A. (2009). Personality conditionings of life satisfaction of 1st-year students of the Faculty of Physical Education in Biała Podlaska. In A. Wolski (Ed.), *Wellness and success in sport* (pp. 372-380). Lublin: Wydawnictwo NeuroCentrum.
12. Turosz, M.A. & Olech A. (2011). The quality of life and contentment with the realisation of partial satisfactions of students from the Faculty of Physical Education and Sport in Biała Podlaska. *Pol. J. Sport Tourism* 18(3), 234-243.
13. Turosz, M.A. (2009). The level of the quality of life vs. psychological resources of highly trained athletes. In E. Rutkowska (Ed.), *Wellness and success in sport* (pp. 207-216). Lublin: Wydawnictwo NeuroCentrum.
14. Turosz, M.A. (2011). Personal resources and deficiency vs. quality of life of students from University of Physical Education in Warsaw. *Problemy Higieny i Epidemiologii* 92(2), 201-210. [in Polish]
15. Juczyński, Z. (2001). *Measurement Tools in Promotion and Health Psychology*. Warszawa: Pracownia Testów Psychologicznych PTP. [in Polish]
16. Zawadzki, B., Strelau J., Szczepaniak P. & Śliwińska M. (1998). *Personality inventory NEO-FFI by Costa and McCrae. The Polish adaptation*. Handbook. Warszawa: Pracownia Testów Psychologicznych PTP. [in Polish]
17. Łaguna, M., Trzebiński J. & Zięba M. (2005). *Hope and Success Questionnaire. Handbook*. Warszawa: Pracownia Testów Psychologicznych PTP. [in Polish]
18. Oleś, P. (1998). *Value Crisis Questionnaire. Handbook*. Warszawa: Pracownia Testów Psychologicznych PTP. [in Polish]
19. Czapinski, J. (2005). Personality of happy person. In J. Czapinski (Ed.), *Positive psychology* (pp. 51-102). Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN. [in Polish]
20. Unalan, D., Celikten M., Soyuer F. & Ozturk A. (2008). Quality of life in Turkish university students and relationship to levels of state – trait anxiety. *International Journal Social Behavior & Personality* 36(3), 417-424.
21. Nowacki, T.W. (2007). Attitudes and values – problem outline. In E.I. Laska (Ed.), *Teachers' education in the context of school transformation* (pp. 173-192). Rzeszów: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Rzeszowskiego. [in Polish]
22. Wnuk, M. & Marcinkowski J.T. (2010). The role of values for meaning of life and students' life satisfaction. *Problemy Higieny i Epidemiologii* 91(3), 458-462. [in Polish]
23. Mackiewicz, W. (2004). About value and sense of life. *Edukacja Filozoficzna* 37, 123-154. [in Polish]
24. Joshanloo, M. & Afshari S. (2011). Big Five personality traits and self-esteem as predictors of life satisfaction in Iran Muslim University students. *Journal of Happiness Studies* 12(1), 105-113.
25. Koziński, J. (2009). Hope – the key to art of life. *Nauka* 2, 7-14. [in Polish]

Submitted: March 10, 2011

Accepted: April 19, 2011