Ideals of Students with Different Levels of Personal Maturity

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Abstract: The article discusses the problems of transformation of personality ideals in modern society, especially their development in adolescence. The factors contributing to the formation of personality maturity in the student age are considered. The problem of slowing the pace of development of personality maturity in the younger generation is emphasized. The possible nature of the relationship between personality maturity and personality ideals is analyzed. During an empirical study, the authors measure the level of personal maturity of students studying at a pedagogical university and determine essential characteristics in developing ideals in subjects with high, satisfactory, and unsatisfactory levels of personality maturity. The research results show the prevalence of a satisfactory level of personal maturity and the dominance of ideals associated with self-development and self-realization. The authors discuss further possibilities of psychological counseling for students with an unsatisfactory level of personality maturity.

1. Introduction

In Russian society, under the influence of modern reality, changes in a number of socio-psychological phenomena, including social and individual ideals, continue. In many respects, due to the influence of mass consumer-oriented culture, the ideals traditional for our society are replaced by new ones or are transformed.

In Russian psychology, ideals have traditionally been studied in connection with moral development and the formation of personality, more often in adolescence and high school age. The works of B. D. Elkonin, S. G. Jacobson, B. S. Bratus, N. I. Sudakov, T. A. Florenskaya, L. I. Bozhovich, E. V. Chudnovsky, I. V. Dubrovina, and etc. are devoted to this.

S. L. Rubinstein pointed out that ideals are formed under the direct social influence. In fact, this is a cultural-historical phenomenon [1]. V. V. Stolin, following A. V. Petrovsky, interpreted ideals as motives of personality. The author pointed out that the ideals broadcast by parents influence the self-esteem and level of claims of children, emphasizing the importance of ideals in their education [2]. I. V. Dubrovina notes the following: "The ideal, as the formation of the semantic sphere of personality, determines the process of cognition and understanding by children and adolescents of the surrounding world and themselves, their understanding of their feelings, relationships with other people, the meaning of their own existence" [3].

Analyzing the development of ideals in ontogenesis, B. S. Bratus paid special attention to adolescence. An ideal in adolescence is often constructed from the moral qualities of several individuals. In the event that these ideals are realized in the life and bring meaning to the ongoing activity, they become the values of the individual, or in terms of B. S. Bratus, semantic formations, as well as real motives [4].

In this regard, the problem of the development of ideals and meanings in the process of formation of personal maturity is of great resesearh interest. According to D. I. Feldstein, this question seems especially relevant in the light of the modern tendency of the younger generation to delay the formation of emotional and social maturity [5].

For S. L. Rubinstein, personal maturity is, first of all, the moral responsibility that the subject assumes, not only for his life and actions but also for the life of those around him [6]. P. Ya. Galperin also notes that the main criterion for personality maturity is the measure of personal responsibility for the actions it performs [7].

D. A. Leontyev also pointed out that a mature person has responsibility, which is internal regulation mediated by value guidelines, self-regulating arbitrary meaningful activity, which is a consequence of the unity of freedom and responsibility in their developed form. At the same time, personal maturity is a concept that characterizes the path that a person moves, and not an age concept [8].

B. S. Bratus drew attention to the fact that "maturity, as a rule, implies rather elevated ideal aspirations, but at the same time, a conscious willingness to fulfill, if necessary, the most modest, earthly tasks for the sake of these aspirations" [9]. E. Fromm among the attributes of a mature person called independence, productivity, the ability to love, modesty [10].

According to G. Allport, a mature person has an expanded sense of "I"; the warmth refers to others in intimate and non-intimate contacts; possesses a sense of fundamental emotional security and self-acceptance; perceives, thinks, and acts actively and in harmony with external reality; capable of self-objectification, self-understanding and humor [11].

Analyzing the possible nature of the relationship between personality maturity and ideals of a person, we can assume that ideals are a consequence of personality maturity. However, an analysis of empirical data and the socio-cultural context suggests the inverse relationship between personality maturity and ideals. That is, progressive ideals that contribute to the development of the personality, if elected as an individual, can serve as a guide on the path to personal maturity. We are inclined to the point of view that the maturity of the personality and its ideals are in dialectic interaction and exert mutual influence on each other.

The purpose of our study is to identify the characteristics of the ideals of students with different levels of personality maturity. We suggested that for students with a higher level of personality maturity, ideals express their desire for development.

2. Materials and Methods

In our empirical study, a total of 99 3rd year students of AltSPU took part. To study personality maturity, a test of personality maturity edited by Yu. Z. Gilbukh was used [12]. The technique allows one to determine the overall level of personality maturity, differentiating it as very high, high, satisfactory, unsatisfactory.

To identify personal ideals, respondents were asked to write a mini-essay on the following topics: "ideal person," "ideal lifestyle," "ideal professional activity." Also, the method of unfinished sentences was applied. Respondents were asked to complete 11 sentences containing the word "ideal" or its derivatives and one sentence, each containing the expression "idol" and "hero."

To study the characteristics of the ideal person in respondents, the method of the semantic differential was used. Respondents were asked to rate the concept of am "ideal person" on the 19 bipolar nine-point scales. Some scales were borrowed by us from the research of V. F. Petrenko [13], others were constructed independently.

To clarify the normality of the distribution of the data obtained during the study, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov criterion was used. Also, in our study, we used the criterion φ^* (this is the Fisher angular transformation), which allows us to reliably establish differences in the frequency of occurrence of the trait observed in two samples. The calculations were performed using the IBM SPSS Statistics 21 program. For high-quality processing, we used content analysis of texts of mini-compositions and incomplete sentences. This method allows one to highlight the semantic units used by respondents in written works.

3. Results

In the study of personality maturity, the subjects showed the lowest results on the scale "Attitude to their "I": 60% of respondents showed an unsatisfactory level. These students are not confident in their abilities, are not satisfied with their abilities, temperament, and character, knowledge, skills. This suggests that a large proportion of subjects has low self-esteem.

According to the "Ability to psychological proximity with others" scale, 47% of respondents also have unsatisfactory results. Almost half of the subjects showed very little benevolence towards people, empathy, listening ability, the need for spiritual closeness with other people.

The test results on the scale "Life Attitude" were more optimal. By such generalized qualities as understanding the relativity of everything that exists, the predominance of intelligence over feeling, emotional poise, prudence (as opposed to impulsivity), the sample as a whole is characterized by normality.

Mostly extreme values are obtained on the "Sense of civic duty" scale. High indicators (42% of respondents) indicate that a large number of respondents consider issues of patriotism to be relevant and are interested in social issues. At the same time, 37% of respondents are indifferent to questions regarding their civil position.

According to the "Achievement Motivation" scale, the average tendency is shifted to high values. The number of respondents with a high level of maturity on this scale is twice as many as the number of respondents who showed an unsatisfactory level.

Thus, in general, the sample is characterized by a larger share of respondents with the following expressed qualities: the desire for the complete self-realization, independence, initiative, willingness to lead, to achieve high results in the actions taken. Analyzing the results on the general scale "Personality maturity," we see that the majority of respondents (54%) showed a satisfactory level of personality maturity. Only 4% of respondents achieve a high level of personal maturity, and 41% of respondents are at an unacceptable level.

The content analysis of mini-essays and students' incomplete sentences revealed the following: respondents with a high level of personal maturity more often than others use concepts that indicate joy when describing their ideals. In four written works, the terms of pleasure are used seven times; ideals are often described in terms of positive emotions. The concepts denoting calm and comfort turned out to be the second in frequency of occurrence. They were used in the works six times. The concept of health was the third most popular. The frequency of occurrence of this concept is 4.

Respondents with a satisfactory level of personality maturity most often used the concepts of "Self-development and self-realization" when describing their ideals. In 54 written works of students, these concepts met 62 times, and in these terms, an ideal lifestyle, an ideal professional activity, and an ideal person were described. The concepts denoting "personality matching" were used somewhat less frequently in terms of frequency of occurrence (53 times). The ideal lifestyle and ideal professional activity were described from the standpoint that, ideally, they should always correspond to a specific personality, to approach and like this particular person. In a group with a satisfactory level of personality maturity, the concept of health was in third place in terms of frequency of use in relation to an ideal lifestyle and an ideal person. In 54 essays, it was used 47 times.

Respondents with the unsatisfactory levels of personal maturity more often than others used the concept of "health" when describing their ideals. In the 41st essay, this term was used 40 times. The concept of "pleasure" is in second place in the frequency of occurrence (32 uses). And the concepts denoting the correspondence of personal ideals were used somewhat less frequently (32 times).

After conducting a content analysis of the students' written work, we compared the frequency of occurrence of semantic units used in the description of ideals in groups of students with different levels of personality maturity. At a statistical significance level of 0.01, the following differences were reliably established.

Students with a high level of personality maturity are significantly more likely than students with a satisfactory and unsatisfactory level of personality maturity to use concepts that indicate the state of "calm and comfort" and terms that show joy when describing their ideals. We believe this shows the trust of students from this group to their own emotions, openness, and trust in their own subjective experiences.

Students with a satisfactory level of personal maturity are significantly more likely than students from a group with an unsatisfactory level to use concepts such as "self-development and self-realization" when describing the ideal lifestyle of an ideal person and ideal professional activity. This indicates their desire for self-actualization. In our opinion, the use of the terms "humanism and empathy" indicates a greater spirituality of students from a group with a satisfactory level of personal maturity.

The terms "personality matching" were in second place in terms of frequency of occurrence. The term "health" is in third place in the frequency of occurrence in groups with a high and satisfactory level of

personality maturity, which, in our opinion, indicates the interest of students in these groups to be in good physical shape.

In a group of students with an unsatisfactory level of personality maturity, the term "health" was most often used, the term "pleasure" in second place. We believe this indicates a focus on the students of this group on the physical, hedonic, and physiological aspects of ideals. The terms describing ideals through "personality matching" are in third place in frequency.

4. Discussion

The revealed features of personality ideals of students with different levels of personality maturity can be considered as one of the diagnostic criteria for express diagnostics of the level of personality maturity in adolescence. In the process of psychological counseling, information can be obtained from the client about his/her ideas about the ideal professional activity, lifestyle, or ideal person. If the description is built primarily in terms of "pleasure," with a high degree of probability, we can assume that this individual has an unacceptable level of personal maturity.

The frequent mention of health in the characterization of ideals among the least personally mature students can be associated with a generally accepted interpretation of this value for a person. However, it remains unclear why this characteristic was not included in the description of ideals among the most mature individuals. Perhaps checking these results in a broader sample of students will allow us to adjust the data. The specifics of the ideals of more personally immature students are expressed in a hedonistic tendency, which corresponds to the general idea of the immaturity of a person. The fact that the ideals of calm and comfort correspond to a high level of personal maturity indicates a desire for inner peace of mind and harmony, coupled with positive emotions that arise when satisfying needs. For the middle level of maturity, the desire for self-development, self-realization is characteristic. This desire can cause internal stress and, sometimes, discomfort. And this means the loss of inner harmony, which significantly distinguishes the ideals of a given level from a higher level of personality maturity.

The data obtained indicate that the concepts of "personality maturity" and "the level of development of a person" are not synonyms. If a high level of personality development is characterized by a desire for self-development, self-actualization (according to A. Maslow), then the maturity of the personality corresponds to ideals, aspirations associated with harmony, emotional balance.

On the other hand, personality ideals can act as separate therapeutic targets. In consultative work aimed at increasing personal maturity, it is possible to emphasize psychological work on certain aspects of ideals, while orienting the work to the features of ideals that were identified among more personally mature respondents. Work with a client with a low level of personality maturity should be organized in such a way that, using the example of his ideal model, he will clarify for himself what he needs for self-development and self-realization.

5. Conclusion

The study revealed that a small number of students have a high level of personality maturity. The personal maturity of the majority of students is at a satisfactory level, and a significant portion of students have an unsatisfactory level of maturity.

Our initial hypothesis is confirmed. It is reliably established that the ideals of students with different levels of personality maturity have differences. Students with a high level of personality maturity are oriented towards a positive perception of reality, surrounding people, and themselves. With a satisfactory level of personal maturity, ideals are characterized by humanity, self-development, self-realization. With a low (unsatisfactory) level of personality maturity, ideals are more hedonistic; students are focused on health and physical pleasure.

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