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## SPECIFIC FEATURES OF LIFE MEANING ORIENTATIONS AND RESILIENCE AMONG STUDENTS OF HUMANITIES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

*The article examines the specific features of life meaning orientations and resilience among humanities students in Ukrainian higher education institutions. The main focus is placed on the problem of anomie in modern society, the impact of war, and socio-economic processes on the spiritual and axiological aspects of youth life. The author noted that under conditions of anomie, traditional value systems rapidly disintegrate, while the levels of solidarity and social responsibility decline.*

*The study is based on V. Frankl's concepts, which outline three main paths to finding life meaning: through creativity, experiencing valuable events, and attitudes toward suffering. Additionally, the research analyzes the "Life Meaning Orientations Test" (LMOT) by D. A. Leontiev to evaluate the sense of life and an adapted resilience test by S. Maddi.*

*In an empirical study involving 80 students from various humanities programs, key trends were identified: student youth demonstrates high orientation toward the future through goal-setting ("life goals") but exhibits lower results on scales of self-realization satisfaction and "locus of control – Self."*

*Students' resilience largely relies on involvement in active life and control; however, the risk acceptance indicator was the lowest. This aspect is crucial for understanding the deeper reasons for young people's adaptive difficulties, especially in the context of socio-economic changes and the impact of war. The author emphasizes the need to improve the higher education system with a focus on practical and axiological approaches that would foster the development of life meaning orientations and resilience among students.*

*Key findings indicate that increasing resilience and life meaning orientations requires enhancing students' psychological competence and creating programs that emphasize the value of self-realization and adaptation to challenging life situations.*

**Key words:** *the meaning of life, complex orientation, vitality, anomia, self-realization, students.*

**Statement of the problem.** The famous French sociologist E. Durkheim [3] at the end of the 19th century reasonably made a difficult, but objective and fair diagnosis of the society of that time, which he designated by the term "anomie" – "anomie" ("without a norm"). The absence of a norm characterized the organization and control of society over its members. This term also defined the life of some people without rules, order and measure, their irresponsibility to society. The diagnosis of "chronic anomie" of society, made by Durkheim, was confirmed by the tragic cataclysms and their consequences in the 20th century. The situation that developed in Ukraine, associated with the war against Russia, has already led to the formation of prerequisites for the deepening of the problem of anomization of Ukrainian society. Socio-economic, spiritual-axiological and socio-psychological processes at the beginning of the 21st century. also, in the opinion of the philosophers who

comprehend them, do not add optimism to all sober-minded people.

The main characteristics of anomie, described in the past by Durkheim and observed today, inexorably "actualize" the postulates of the famous Austrian neurologist and psychiatrist V. Frankl, the creator of logotherapy [4. p. 64], whose ideas are capable of explaining modern realities. As is well known, the three main postulates – "free will", "the meaning of life" and "the will to search for meaning" – from Frankl's theory formed the basis of his psychotherapeutic practice, with the help of which he stimulated and reinforced the conviction of his patients that a person in any life situation must preserve and demonstrate his inherent freedom and independence in order to have the opportunity to adequately and equally choose a strategy of behavior in relation to an unfair fate. In other words, Frankl literally "imposes" on a person the awareness of "personal responsibility" for

the choice he has made, i. e. the need for a personal and active search for meaning in any situation.

Otherwise, he is left with only one alternative: to surrender himself to fate, to find himself facing “existential frustration” and to fall into an “existential vacuum.”

Reductionism in the culture and mentality of modern society is confirmed by the behavior of individuals, groups and social strata. First of all, we should name such symptoms as the desire for material well-being and the absolutization of “materiality”, personal gain, self-isolation and encapsulation, the widespread occurrence of various psychopathological manifestations, the strengthening of individualistic behavioral strategies that are acquiring the qualities of stable ethnocultural scripts in a number of countries. Introversion, focusing on one’s inner world, often accompanied by disinterest and loss of a sense of community with other people, inexorably leads to painful melancholy and egoistic suicides, which was noted back in the late 19th century by E. Durkheim. Such a peculiar and widespread reductionism Frankl contrasts Kant’s understanding of “transcendence” and “self-transcendence”. The latter “reveals the fact that to be human means to be directed toward something else outside oneself” [3, p. 292].

And since our time is again showing signs of anomie, it would be useful to actualize the ways of confronting existential frustration and existential vacuum indicated by Frankl. The first of them requires the “inclusion” of a person in some kind of creative, productive activity for the benefit of others and society. The second way prescribes the need to acquire personal, lived experience, which, regardless of whether it is positive or negative, a person must perceive as necessary and valuable. And finally, the third way concerns the attitude and relationship of a person to failures and misfortunes, troubles and sufferings that inevitably accompany human life, which Frankl convincingly proves with examples from the therapy of his patients, and most strongly – through his own experience in the Nazi concentration camp Auschwitz.

In accordance with these three ways of comprehending the meaning of life – creation and creativity, experiencing experience as a value and attitude towards suffering – Frankl distinguishes three “basic value systems”: creativity, intensity of experiences and a person’s attitude towards negative facts and events that discourage him and deform the meaning of his own existence.

**Analysis of recent research and publications.** The theoretical study of the identified problem

revealed that the following Ukrainian researchers were involved in the issue of resilience: S. V. Bogdanov, O. Zaleskaya, V. Klimchuk, O. Kononenko, T. A. Titarenko, M. Markova, and among foreign researchers: E. Anthony, T. Betancourt, J. Williamson, M. Wessells [2, p. 568]. The current state of the problem of life-meaning orientations of applicants for higher education in various aspects has been thoroughly studied in the works of O. Vasilchenko, O. Leshenko, O. Chmir, I. Glavatskikh, G. Mednikova, O. O. Sazonova.

According to Frankl, three factors influence the formation of the essence of human existence (“spirituality”, “freedom” and “responsibility”), united by him under the general name “values”. The latter can be specific, incomparable and even unique for each individual and any situation in life.

Frankl’s theoretical concept of the will in the search for the meaning of life and the actualization of the idea of self-transcendence quickly finds its empirical research confirmation, among which one of the first belonged to his American colleagues James Crumbaugh and Leonard Maholich.

One of the adaptations of the test of J. Crumbaugh and L. Maholich for the study of the meaning of life was made by D. A. Leontiev. This version of the test for the study of the meaning of life offers five factors, which the author and his followers divide into two groups.

In the first of them, the researchers included the factors of “goals in life”, “interest and emotional richness of life” and “satisfaction with self-realization”, correlating and connecting them approximately with the future (goals), with the present (process) and with the past (results), endowing them with the qualities of potential sources of meaning in human life. The second group of factors includes “locus of control – Self” and “locus of control – Life”, that is, a person’s confidence that he can be a factor in his own life, and the awareness that there is a potential opportunity for independent choice and its implementation in life. This version of the test, called “Test of Meaningful Life Orientations”, including five subscales reflecting three specific meaning-of-life orientations and two sides of the locus of control, united by the “general indicator” of meaningfulness of life, we, as will be shown below, used in our empirical study.

**Task statement.** The establishment of characteristics and specific features of life-purpose orientations and resilience of applicants for higher education in the humanities of higher educational institutions of Ukraine became the goal of our research. Its achievement required solving the following tasks:

1) establishing the internal architectonics of life-purpose goals and orientations, as well as identifying their dominant components; 2) assessing the level of functioning of resilience as a personal disposition with its three structural components – involvement, control and risk acceptance.

It is known that needs and motives, values and interests as motivating, regulating and controlling the active behavior of people in one or another sphere of manifestation have always been objectified and reflected in more specific goals, which, for their part, continue to direct and organize this activity in the short and long term. Achieving such goals gives different meaning to human life.

And it is no coincidence that it is precisely this issue – the value-motivational side of the personality and its meaningful-targeted activity – that has long been widely studied by the social and humanitarian sciences, whose representatives have acquired such textbook fame that they need to be mentioned here once again.

Based on the belief that the reality in which people live and work must always be subject to reflection and objective interpretation, we selected only one fragment of this broad and complex reality and defined it as **the subject** of our empirical research, namely, **the goals** that regulate the activities and behavior of young people (higher education applicants) and give meaning to their lives.

**Outline of the main material of the study.** Our study was conducted with students ( $N = 80$ ) from the first to the fourth year of study of full-time and part-time departments of the humanities of different higher educational institutions of Ukraine. The study

was conducted in a remote format using Google test forms. As a methodological tool, we used the «Test of Life-Meaning Orientations» (SLO), designed and validated by D.A. Leontiev. To study the resilience of applicants for higher education, an adapted version of the test by S. Maddy was used.

Mathematical and statistical data processing was performed using the SPSS program, version 22. The data were subjected to dispersion analysis via the ANOVA method, which allows establishing the relationship between individual indicators. An additional Bonferoni test was also applied, which takes into account differences in the number of respondents of individual specialties.

The obtained data from the life orientation test (LOT) are presented in Figure 1, which contains the average meanings on all five scales of general indicator of “meaning of life”. They show that the average values for the three scales of the general indicator are close and statistically significantly differ from the average values of the other two scales. The first group includes, in descending order, the scales of “goals in life” ( $X = 32.23$ ;  $SD = 7.95$ ), “the process of life or emotional richness of life” ( $X = 31.06$ ;  $SD = 7.53$ ) and “locus of control – life” ( $X = 30.77$ ;  $SD = 6.79$ ). The second group combines the scales of “results or satisfaction with self-realization” ( $X = 25.62$ ;  $SD = 5.31$ ) and “locus of control – I” ( $X = 21.39$ ;  $SD = 4.45$ ), although they clearly differ in their average values.

The results obtained give reason to believe that the level of meaningfulness of life among our respondents is based mainly on the “contribution” of the values of the scales of the first group – “goals in life”, “the

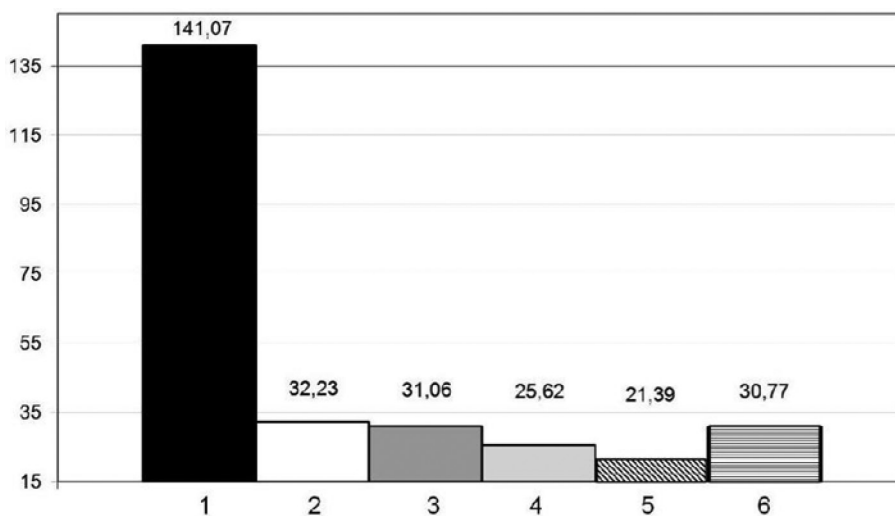


Figure 1. Average values of life meaning indicators.

Scales: 1 – general life meaning indicator, 2 – life goals, 3 – life process, 4 – results, 5 – locus of control “I”, 6 – locus of control “Life”

process of life or emotional saturation of life” and “locus of control – Life”, and to a much lesser extent due to the second group – “results or satisfaction with self-realization” and “locus of control – P”.

The results on the scale “goals in life” characterize the process of setting goals, the achievement of which would help students acquire a sense of meaningfulness, direction and prospects for life in time. With relatively high values on this scale, we are talking about the fact that the subjects are guided by “clear goals and intentions” in life, as a result of which life seems to them “purposeful and quite meaningful”, that they have found their calling, satisfying and providing them with prospects for the future.

On the scale of “life process or “emotional richness of life” they obtained values are close to the data of the previous scale. Comparatively higher values on this scale indicate that these subjects are passionate about life, which is proceeding in accordance with their dreams, goals and plans, that they are active and purposeful, that their life as a whole seems interesting to them, emotionally and meaningfully rich and meaningful. Conversely, low values on this indicator characterize passive and bored people, those whose life proceeds without exciting interests and news, which results in dissatisfaction with the present life, devoid of purposefulness and motivating meaning.

Data on the scale “results or satisfaction with self-realization” gave us grounds to classify them into a group with significantly lower values. However, we believe that the objective content of this scale gives it the quality of a kind of “criterion” of the meaningfulness of life as a whole. And therefore, when subjects receive high values on it, then we can assume that these are really people who, at this stage of life, believe that daily activities and their results are interesting to them, bring them pleasure and satisfaction, that if it is necessary to sum up the already passed stage of life – it will be positive. But when the values on this scale are low, then we can assume that they hide the absence of interesting activities for the individual and successes in the direction of conscious

goal-setting and implementation of life plans, that, most likely, we are dealing with a feeling of anxiety, with predominantly negative experiences.

The last two scales are “locus of control – life” and “locus of control – P”, although closely related and mutually complementary, they nevertheless reveal fundamentally different meanings. The awareness that a person has, in principle, the opportunity to control his life, to be its «master», to dream and make plans, to make independent decisions for their implementation, the conviction that he can make his life choices in accordance with his ideals and plans (“locus of control – Life”), however, is not always accompanied by adequate efforts on the part of applicants for higher education to achieve a correspondence between “dream and reality”, “thoughts and actions”, “word and deed”. Such “incongruence” is apparently signaled by significantly lower values of the subjects on the “locus of control – P” scale. Behind them lie the admissions of some respondents that they are inactive and unfocused, that they abandon themselves to the “flow of life”, that external circumstances are stronger than they themselves, that their own life is boring and beyond their control (externalized localization of control); In other words, these data indicate a state of being “stuck” in the past and lacking perspective on the future.

Not least in the explanation of the obtained data should be the specific features of the broader context – national and ethnocultural and, especially, the modern concrete historical – socio-economic, spiritual-axiological and educational context, as well as the conditions of the problems and hardships associated with the war against russia.

In our empirical study of the resilience of higher education applicants, an adapted version of S. Maddi’s test was used.

The data obtained using the “hardiness test” after mathematical and statistical processing are presented in figure 2, which contains average values for both the general hardiness indicator and its three specifications – involvement, control and risk acceptance.

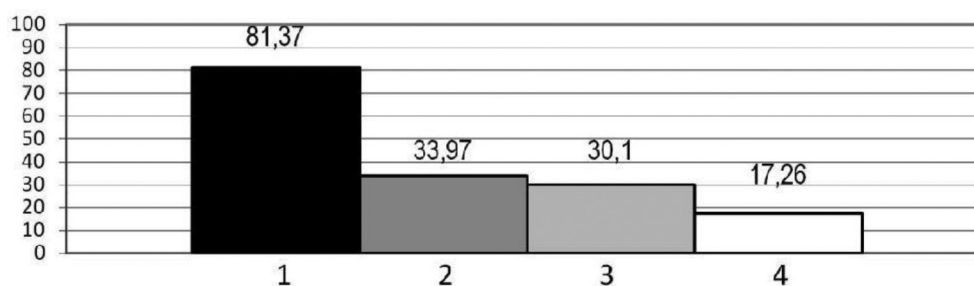


Figure 2. Average data.

Scales: overall resilience score – 1, involvement – 2, control – 3, risk acceptance – 4

The results of the mathematical and statistical analysis showed that the indicator with the highest average values is “involvement” ( $X = 33.97$ ;  $SD = 18.08$ ), immediately and closely followed by the level of the second indicator – “control” ( $X = 30.10$ ;  $SD = 7.34$ ), from which the lower values of the third indicator – “risk acceptance” ( $X = 17.26$ ;  $SD = 4.82$ ) statistically differ by almost half. That is, the level of resilience of our subjects is based mainly on involvement and control, and to a lesser extent – on risk acceptance. The typological (profile) analysis allowed us to distinguish between two groups of subjects. One of them has higher values for all parameters of resilience, and the other – with lower ones.

If “engagement” as a component of resilience is associated mainly with a person’s interest in the surrounding world and life in it, with concentration and satisfaction with the results of their activities and relationships with other people, in the process of which they experience, check and verify the level of their capabilities, their personal value, perceive life as meaningful, then what do our data on this issue indicate? In general, the data on this scale, in comparison with other populations in the project, indicate its relatively low values ( $X = 33.97$ ;  $SD = 8.08$ ). We find the basis for these low values in the direct or indirect manifestations of lack of interest in life, often expressed by most of the applicants for higher education ( $N = 50-52$ ), admissions that sometimes life seems “colorless” to them.

We see arguments for this in the results of the typological (profile) analysis. Along with this, they do not feel satisfaction from the activity they are involved in and consider it “useless”, and sometimes they are frightened by thoughts about the future. On the contrary, we find positive illustrations in the group with higher values ( $X = 40.89$ ) on this scale, namely, satisfaction of higher education applicants with employment, the desire to be up to date with events, the feeling that they are respected in a friendly circle.

Behind “control” lies the individual’s awareness of the need to actively counteract negative circumstances, overcome failures in activities and unfavorable relationships in order to find and discover the meaning of life. The average values on this scale are lower ( $X = 30.10$ ;  $SD = 7.34$ ) than involvement, but still close to them. On the positive side, the first group of higher education applicants ( $X = 36.24$ ) shows a preference for difficult-to-reach goals, confidence in their ability to “control the situation” around them

and, thanks to their persistence, influence the results. Unsuccessful, or even “defeated”, but in principle oriented towards the future, higher education applicants tend to renew attempts to achieve their desired goals. In other words, we can say that these are, in essence, higher education applicants who internalize the “locus of control”, reflecting on their own capabilities in relation to one or another activity and their results.

In the second group, the negative attitudes of higher education applicants ( $X = 25.29$ ) on the control scale are illustrated by the admissions that they are often influenced by circumstances and «go with the flow», that the inevitable difficulties of life confuse and tire them. They are visited by the feeling that they are not «masters» of their own lives, that it seems to flow past them and independently of them, that their efforts are unproductive, that some of their current problems are rooted in the distant past, explained by events that have already occurred. In such cases, perhaps, the externalized form of «locus of control» comes to the fore.

It was noted that the average values for the third indicator of resilience – “risk taking” are the lowest ( $X = 17.26$ ;  $SD = 4.82$ ) and that they statistically significantly differ from the results of the first two indicators – involvement and control. We attach particular importance to this fact, since, in our opinion, it is the acceptance of risk in the face of unfavorable circumstances and the fight against them that have the qualities of a kind of “predictor” of resilience. Is all this perceived by the subjects as a value that gives meaning to their own existence and life?

On the contrary, those inclined to accept risks ( $X = 20.72$ ), despite failures in their own activities and regardless of relationships with others (successful/unsuccessful), perceive and use the experience they have accumulated as their dynamizing, guiding and organizing value in life. We see the basis for this in their flexibility in the face of circumstances, in their confidence in the correctness of their own decisions, in the ability to positively influence processes and their results, using their persistence and steadfastness. Such attitudes of applicants for higher education directly correspond to the postulates of existentialism that risk in the struggle to meet and overcome difficulties and unfavorable life circumstances is the right path to continuous development and progress both individually and socially.

**Conclusions.** The established significant discrepancy between “risk acceptance” as a kind of “core” characteristic of resilience, on the one hand, and its other two indicators – involvement

and control, on the other hand, has its reasons both in the subjects themselves and in the socio-economic, spiritual-axiological and normative-practical context surrounding them. One can use the obvious peculiar “not «congruence» between the individual components of the same general construct of personality – its resilience in the face of life’s difficulties, one of the postulates of humanistic psychology and, more precisely, those theoretical conclusions that K. Rogers made with respect to our time. Self-determination of people, according to Rogers, imperatively requires the presence of personal experience or, as he calls it, a «phenomenal field», which includes not only external, exogenous factors and influences, but also their internal, endogenous experiences on the part of the personality. Congruence, that is, the correspondence and equivalence of consciousness about something about the world and oneself, on the one hand, with the real actions, experience and emotions of a person, on the other hand, is an imperative requirement for productivity and achievement, for identity and integrity, for “self-actualization” and “transcendence” of the personality, and hence for the meaningfulness of one’s own existence. We still cannot confidently say that young people have

enough personal experience to provide the necessary structured “phenomenal field” of personality that K. Rogers talks about.

Let us return to the natural environment of student age – to the modern system in the field of higher education. If we look closely at the system of our humanitarian higher education, we cannot help but notice and agree that the praxeological and axiological approaches do not find a place in it to the extent necessary. It is not oriented and does not place an emphasis on independent search and acquisition of knowledge by applicants for higher education with the help, of course, of teachers; students are most often offered theoretical and “ready-made knowledge” and they rarely find themselves in conditions of independent and subjective acquisition of it.

Given the current situation in Ukraine, the problem of forecasting, preventing and providing timely assistance to a young person receiving higher education who is experiencing a difficult life situation remains relevant, despite the existing diversity of models of activity of the psychological service of higher educational institutions, as well as various courses and training programs that increase the psychological competence of both the teenagers themselves, and teachers, and parents [1, p. 129].

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#### Віденєєв І. О. ОСОБЛИВОСТІ ОРІЄНТАЦІЙ У СЕНСІ ЖИТТЯ ТА ЖИТТЄСТІЙКІСТЬ У ЗДОБУВАЧІВ ВИЩОЇ ОСВІТИ ГУМАНІТАРНИХ СПЕЦІАЛЬНОСТЕЙ

У статті розглядаються особливості смисложиттєвих орієнтацій та життєстійкості здобувачів вищої освіти гуманітарних спеціальностей закладів вищої освіти України. Основна увага приділяється проблемі аномії в сучасному суспільстві, впливу війни та соціально-економічних процесів на духовні та аксіологічні аспекти життя молоді. Автор зазначив, що в умовах аномії традиційні системи цінностей швидко руйнуються, а рівень солідарності та відповідальності в суспільстві знижується.

Дослідження базується на концепціях В. Франкла, який виокремлює три основні шляхи до пошуку смислу життя: через творчість, проживання цінного досвіду та ставлення до страждань. Також дослідження аналізує «тест смисложиттєвих орієнтацій» (СЖО) для оцінки смислу життя та адаптований тест життєстійкості С. Мадді.

У ході емпіричного дослідження за участю 80 здобувачів вищої освіти з різних курсів гуманітарних спеціальностей виявлено ключові тенденції: студентська молодь відзначається високими показниками орієнтації на майбутнє через постановку цілей («цілі в житті»), але демонструє нижчі результати за шкалами задоволеності самореалізацією та локусу контролю «Я».

Життєстійкість здобувачів вищої освіти значною мірою базується на залученості до активного життя та контролі, проте показник прийняття ризику виявився найнижчим. Цей аспект важливий

*для розуміння глибших причин адаптаційних труднощів молоді, особливо в умовах соціально-економічних змін і впливу війни. Автор зазначає необхідність удосконалення системи вищої освіти з акцентом на практичні та аксіологічні підходи, що сприятимуть формуванню смисложиттєвих орієнтацій і життєстійкості здобувачів вищої освіти.*

*Загальні висновки вказують на те, що для підвищення рівня життєстійкості та смисложиттєвих орієнтацій необхідно працювати над розвитком психологічної компетентності здобувачів вищої освіти, створювати програми, які акцентують на цінності самореалізації та адаптації до складних життєвих ситуацій.*

**Ключові слова:** *смисложиттєві орієнтації, життєстійкість, аномія, самореалізація, здобувачі вищої освіти.*