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A sense of satisfaction with life in adolescents and young adults of different psychological gender

1. Introduction

Satisfaction with life in young people is an important part of their subjective well-being. It is connected with the experiencing positive and negative emotions, but also with comparing their situation with the standards established by them. It is therefore a process of global evaluation of one's life, which has many different conditions, both subjective and objective ones (e.g. health, living conditions, their beliefs, level of psychosocial development). The research also indicates the relationship of life satisfaction with emotional intelligence, so it will be fostered by the awareness of their own emotions and the ability to manage them. No less important are the relationships with people and the level of satisfaction of needs, especially the need of security (Timoszyk-Tomczak, Bugajska, 2013).

In this context, it can be assumed that the life satisfaction of adolescents and young adults is also associated with psychological gender, as the studies confirm its impact on the level of human functioning, the efficiency of its operation and development opportunities. They show that androgenic people are characterized by the best adaptation, because they are more resistant to stress, have a stronger personality, higher self-esteem and mental health.

1.1. Satisfaction with life

The term "satisfaction" means the emotional state, the result of achieving some goal. Thus achieving something worthwhile, obtaining a desired state can influence the affective state of the individual. Given human life, satisfaction may be associated with its purpose whose achievement or the same way for its implementation can bring satisfaction (Timoszyk-Tomczak, Bugajska, 2013).

The concept of life satisfaction in psychology is combined with such concepts as happiness, a sense of mental well-being, life satisfaction or quality of life. Happiness exists in the literature interchangeably with mental wellbeing and in social sciences it is understood as a positive attitude towards life. Janusz Czapiński (2001) defines happiness as an attitude toward life that allows man to actively cope with adversity and consistently strive to achieve important values. Its manifestation can be a subjective experience balance, which requires a cognitive assessment and experiencing positive emotions.

A concept similar to satisfaction with life is the quality of life, with the provision that the quality of life is a broader concept that includes the process of meeting the needs of tangible and intangible assets arising from compliance with standards or implementation of various assets (Czapiński, 2001).

Interest in the quality of life is nothing new, because since philosophers began to ask questions about the meaning and purpose of human existence, attempts were made to its evaluation. Initially, the quality of life was understood only as the satisfaction resulting from the possession of material goods, so it was associated with a high standard of living, wealth, possession of something valuable. Much later they expanded the meaning of the concept of intangible assets, such as health, freedom or happiness. Thus the quality of life is sometimes referred to as welfare (Rostowska, 2008).

In psychology, the quality of life is treated as a theoretical construct, considered in a specific cultural context, referring to human expectations that involve selected dimensions of one's own life (Rapley, 2003, Reber, 2000).

Quality of life is also sometimes recognized in the context of the theory of needs - as the degree of satisfaction of material and immaterial needs - both individuals and families, or society as a whole. It therefore involves the potential capabilities of the man which enable human development. Augustyn Bańka (2005) believes that the assessment of quality of life is changing under the influence of everyday human experience and it is the result of continuous human development. It is a result of developing criteria and standards for comparing information obtained at different times - and these are the result of the man's judgments about life. That global assessment of life requires human analysis of a variety of information, from multiple sources, such as: emotional states that man experiences, events in which he participated in the past, objectives and expectations directed towards the future, as well as social comparison (Trzebińska, 2008, Rosochacka-Gmitrzak, 2010, Świerżewska, 2010).

In the short term, which experiences a young man, the evaluation of life is not very stable. In the long term prospective - stability assessment of their own lives is increasing. A concept that refers to the level of stability of these assessments is the "onion theory of happiness" Janusz Czapiński, according to which happiness has three distinct aspects: the will to live (biologically determined disposition to constructive coping), generalized feeling of well-being and ongoing assessment of the situation. Each event is first subjected to emotional and cognitive assessment, because the current sense of happiness the easiest changes, but the will to live is not altered by events and this is what it allows a constructive, even if declining, satisfaction with life (Czapiński, 2004).

Assisting people in an effort to improve the quality of life is related to having knowledge of the factors that contribute to optimal functioning. Here the focus is on the mechanisms of functioning of people that explain the differences between them. One of them may be a psychological gender.

1.2. Psychological gender

Different people possess varying amounts of "maleness" and "femaleness," or masculinity and femininity (Bem, 1974, s. 155, Bem, Lenney, 1976). Gender identity is one of the most basic and most powerful components comprising person's personality: self-concept and others' perceptions about *who the person is*. Psychological gender creates a structure of I, and its final form depends, among others, on different kinds of identification with significant people, including primarily with the parent as a model and a person having the greatest impact on a child, especially during childhood and adolescence.

Bem (1976, 2001, Howard, 2014) viewed androgyny in a positive light, considering it advantageous for individuals to internalize both masculine and feminine psychological attributes. The concept of psychological androgyny refers to the co-occurrence in the same individual, regardless of his or her biological sex, of a comparable degree of socially desirable masculine ('instrumental') and feminine ('expressive') qualities. Sandra Bem's (1994) research shows that the most beneficial identity in many ways is androgyny. Having both high scores on both scales of femininity and masculinity increases our repertoire of behaviours, enabling better adaptation to different situations in life. People typified sexually, or identifying themselves with their gender react in a stable way, consistent with the entourage introduced by gender stereotypes. This causes that they have a limited amount of

reaction and more conventional beliefs about social gender roles. According to Bem (2000) this type of mentality makes that individuals are not able to exploit the full potential and to make a full, all-round personality development.

Units identifying themselves with the traditional recipes of their gender role repertoire represent a more rigid behaviour, which is in many ways limited.

In some studies there is emphasized the co-existence of negative psychological consequences and clearly developed features of mental gender. It turns out that high levels of femininity in women are associated with high anxiety, neuroticism, low self-esteem and low social acceptance. These women show inhibition in behaviours that require competence of performing the role of both male and female (Bem, Lenney, 1976, Lipińska-Grobelny, 2008).

The research has shown that people who do not have the personality traits developed as female nor male, reveal a number of deficits in social situations and may have adaptation problems. Psychological androgyny is the integration and complementarity of male and female elements in the personality. The research confirms that androgynous people show great flexibility of response and richer repertoire of behaviours (Moscovitch Hofmann, Litz, 2005).

Research has suggested that androgynous individuals have greater success in heterosexual intimate relationships, probably due to their greater ability to understand and accept each other's differences. Moreover, androgyny is psycho-protective (Prakash et al., 2010). Recent research has revealed that people with the most positive traits of androgyny are psychologically healthier and happier (Deligeorge, 2011). What's more androgynous children and adults tend to have higher levels of self-esteem and are more adaptable in diverse settings. According to Silverman (1993) many highly gifted and creative children tend to be androgynous. Tolan (1997) has also found that highly gifted children are more androgynous than other children; they tend to reject strict gender identities.

2. Aim of the study

The authors of the study wanted to find answer for following problems:

1. Is the psychological gender differentiated by the level of life satisfaction of respondents?
2. Does the gender of respondents differentiate the psychological level of their belief in the possibility of achieving the objectives?

2.1. Methods

In the research there has been used SLSS Huebner's Scale (Student's Life Satisfaction Scale) (1991), to study the quality of life. The SLSS is a seven-item self-report measure in which to scale with six (0-5 points) a person shall determine to what extent they agreed with statements given - from *I strongly disagree* to *I strongly agree*.

The original version of the scale consisted of 10 items; the scale was subsequently reduced to 7 items based on item analysis and reliability estimates date and this version was used in the research.

In order to isolate the types of psychological gender there was used Equality Psychological Inventory EPI in the study of A Kuczyńska (1992, 2001). It consists of 35 items, of which 15 reflect the cultural stereotype of masculinity, and 15 of items - cultural stereotype of femininity, the other finding that the concept of buffer - the gender-neutral.

People present their opinions on the statements on a five-point scale. Indicators of reliability of the IPP indicate satisfactory reliability of the tool (scale Masculinity $r = 0.783$, scale Femininity = 0.785).

2.2. Surveyed group

The study included 543 adolescents and young adults aged 13-26 years, where the average age of both surveyed sexes was approx. 17 years (12 people did not provide their age).

Tab. 1. *Structure of the surveyed group based on sex and age*

Sex		N	Mean	St. Dev.
Age	Female	346	17,47	3,048
	Male	185	17,28	3,406
Source: self - elaboration				

On the basis of the Inventory of Psychological Gender there has been made a division into four groups. The structure of the groups is presented in Table No. 2.

Tab. 2. Structure of the surveyed group based on sex and psychological gender

Psychological gender	Sex		Total
	Female	Male	
Undifferentiated gender	71	46	117
	20,2%	24,1%	21,5%
Feminine	122	17	139
	34,7%	8,9%	25,6%
Masculine	37	73	110
	10,5%	38,2%	20,3%
Androgyny	122	55	177
	34,7%	28,8%	32,6%
Total	352	191	543
	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%
Source: self - elaboration			

For women, the most numerous group are people who identify themselves with the psychological feminine and androgynous gender (almost 35% of respondents in both cases). The smallest group are women with male mentality. For men, the largest group (nearly 33%) are people identifying with the male gender, the smallest group are the so-called feminine men (nearly 9%). These results are similar to results indexable by S. Bem in the US population. Both in women and men groups a noticeable group (22%) are people with so-called undifferentiated gender, or sexually indeterminate individuals who have shaped slightly masculine and feminine qualities (regardless of their biological sex). When we consider that this type is the least efficient in terms of social functioning, it is a relatively worrying number of subjects.

2.3. Results

In order to compare the results of the surveyed groups the authors carried out a multidimensional analysis of variance, the results of which are shown in table 3 and 5.

Tab. 3. *Multidimensional analysis of variance of women's life satisfaction with different type of psychological gender*

		Sum of squares	Mean square	F	Sig.
1. My life is going well	Between Groups	29,132	9,711	6,802	,000
	Within Groups	493,965	1,428		
	Total	523,097			
2. My life is just right	Between Groups	10,675	3,558	2,546	,056
	Within Groups	482,179	1,398		
	Total	492,854			
5. I have a good life	Between Groups	16,240	5,413	3,678	,012
	Within Groups	507,748	1,472		
	Total	523,989			
6. I have what I want in life	Between Groups	22,459	7,486	4,723	,003
	Within Groups	543,685	1,585		
	Total	566,144			
7. My life is better than most people	Between Groups	48,242	16,081	7,345	,000
	Within Groups	748,755	2,189		
	Total	796,997			
Life Satisfaction	Between Groups	934,311	311,437	6,390	,000
	Within Groups	16960,553	48,737		
	Total	17894,864			
Belief in the achieving assumed goals	Between Groups	12567,829	4189,276	14,425	,000
	Within Groups	97579,121	290,414		
	Total	110146,950			

Source: self - elaboration

Multidimensional analysis of ANOVA variance showed significant differences between the two types of psychological gender in the analysed group of women. There is to be observed statistically significant difference ($p < 0.000$) in the general level of satisfaction with life as well as in individual items of the scale. For women, these differences relate to understanding life as "quite right", the good life ($p < 0.05$) and achieving what one desires ($p < 0.01$) and the feeling that their lives are better than others ($p < 0.000$).

There is also a statistically significant difference in terms of beliefs about the possibilities of attaining the objectives pursued ($p < 0.000$).

Tab.4. *Relation between type of psychological gender and women's life satisfaction (post hoc tests)*

Female			Mean difference (I-J)	Sig.
1. My life is going well	Undifferentiated gender	Feminine	,194	,889
		Masculine	-,233	,912
		Androgyny	-,480*	,039
	Feminine	Undifferentiated gender	-,194	,889
		Masculine	-,427	,325
		Androgyny	-,674*	,000
5. I have a good life	Androgyny	Undifferentiated gender	,348	,297
		Feminine	,496*	,007
		Masculine	,113	,997
6. I have what I want in life	Androgyny	Undifferentiated gender	,563*	,025
		Feminine	,543*	,003
		Masculine	,363	,620
7. My life is better than most people	Androgyny	Undifferentiated gender	,901*	,001
		Feminine	,682*	,001
		Masculine	,152	,997
Life Satisfaction	Androgyny	Undifferentiated gender	3,401*	,011
		Feminine	3,492*	,000
		Masculine	1,021	,969
Belief in the achieving assumed goals	Androgyny	Undifferentiated gender	14,649*	,000
		Feminine	11,517*	,000
		Masculine	3,986	,835

Source: Self - elaboration

Analysis of internal relation between scores showed that for women androgyny is a dimension of gender, which is associated with higher levels of overall satisfaction with life compared to the feminine gender and undifferentiated gender ($p < 0.000$), as well as individual aspects. Women with androgynous sexuality compared to the feminine gender and undifferentiated gender often they think that in their lives a well-arranged and perceive their lives as better than other men

($p < 0.001$). At the same time more often they feel that they have achieved in life what they wanted ($p < 0.05$).

Androgyny is also associated in women with higher levels of conviction about the possibility of implementing their plans and goals in life (comparing with feminine and undifferentiated gender, $p < 0.000$).

Interestingly, in the case of women, there are no differences between androgyny and masculine, suggesting that the mentality of men in women appears to play a positive role by giving women a higher level of self-efficacy and satisfaction with life.

Tab. 5. *Multidimensional analysis of variance of men's life satisfaction with different type of psychological gender*

Male		Sum of squares	Mean square	F	Sig.
1. My life is going well	Between Groups	26,455	8,818	5,798	,001
	Within Groups	281,355	1,521		
	Total	307,810			
3. I would like to change many things in my life	Between Groups	29,916	9,972	3,268	,022
	Within Groups	564,444	3,051		
	Total	594,360			
5. I have a good life	Between Groups	19,347	6,449	4,275	,006
	Within Groups	277,605	1,509		
	Total	296,952			
7. My life is better than most people	Between Groups	43,424	14,475	6,894	,000
	Within Groups	380,014	2,100		
	Total	423,438			
Life Satisfaction	Between Groups	830,524	276,841	6,209	,000
	Within Groups	8337,843	44,587		
	Total	9168,366			
Belief in the achieving assumed goals	Between Groups	10378,758	3459,586	9,814	,000
	Within Groups	61687,980	352,503		
	Total	72066,737			
Source: self - elaboration					

Multidimensional analysis of ANOVA variance showed statistically significant differences also between the two types of psychological gender in the analysed group of men.

There is a significant statistical difference ($p < 0,000$) in the general level of satisfaction with life as well as in individual questions of scale. For men, these differences include the area of understanding life which is going well ($p < 0,001$), having a good life ($p < 0,01$), a sense that life is better than most people ($p < 0,000$).

There appears a difference is seeing many things to change in life between groups as well ($p < 0,05$).

There also occurs statistically significant difference in terms of beliefs about the possibilities of attaining the pursued objectives ($p < 0.000$) and general life satisfaction ($p < 0.000$).

Tab. 6. Relation between type of psychological gender and men' s life satisfaction (post hoc tests)

Male			Mean Difference (I-J)	Sign.
1. My life is going well	Undifferentiated gender	Feminine	-,463	,683
		Masculine	-,836*	,021
		Androgyny	-,933*	,005
3. I would like to change many things in my life	Undifferentiated gender	Feminine	-,153	1,000
		Masculine	,881*	,047
		Androgyny	,273	,968
5. I have a good life	Undifferentiated gender	Feminine	-,732	,123
		Masculine	-,764*	,043
		Androgyny	-,741	,058
7. My life is better than most people	Undifferentiated gender	Feminine	,142	1,000
		Masculine	-,831*	,016
		Androgyny	-1,127*	,001
Life Satisfaction	Undifferentiated gender	Feminine	-2,156	,696
		Masculine	-4,843*	,003
		Androgyny	-4,882*	,005
Belief in the achieving assumed goals	Undifferentiated gender	Feminine	-2,947	,996
		Masculine	-15,173*	,005
		Androgyny	-19,095*	,000
	Androgyny	Undifferentiated gender	19,095*	,000
		Feminine	16,148*	,014
		Masculine	3,922	,728

Source: self - elaboration

For men, the least effective gender seems to be undifferentiated gender. People who are non - sexual oriented describe themselves as those whose life is not going well ($p < 0.05$ comparing with androgyny and masculine) and their life satisfaction is much lower than others ($P < 0.01$). They want to change much in their life comparing with masculine people. Moreover, they think their life is worse than of other people. Probably their lack of acceptance of themselves and their preferences find reflection in a lack of overall satisfaction with life. In terms of self-efficacy

towards achieving the objectives androgyny seems to have a greater belief in the possibility of success compared to the feminine ($p < 0.05$) and undifferentiated gender ($p < 0.000$). Also masculine seem to be convinced that they execute effectively their intentions compared to non - sexual oriented people ($p < 0.01$).

Conclusions

For women, psychological androgyny appears to be associated with higher levels of life satisfaction and higher levels of conviction about the possibility of achievement of objectives compared to the psychological femininity and undifferentiated gender.

In men, psychological androgyny and male sexuality is associated with higher levels of life satisfaction and belief in the possibility of carrying out the tasks of life compared with undifferentiated gender. Psychological androgyny of men is associated with a greater sense of efficacy compared to women's psychological gender of men.

Unspecified gender (for almost 25% of those surveyed) seems to be the least effective type of psychological gender in terms of self-efficacy as well as satisfaction with life. Hence, the education of young people should aim at education in their characteristics associated with high levels of confidence, decisiveness, assertiveness and independence, both in the proceedings and thinking.

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