

UDC 159.923.2-057.875:17.023.34
DOI: 10.26565/2225-7756-2019-67-05

A SENSE OF COHERENCE AS A FACTOR IN AN INDIVIDUAL'S WELL-BEING

Павленко Ганна Володимирівна, здобувач вищої освіти ступеня доктора філософії з психології 4-го року денної форми навчання, Харківський національний університет імені В. Н. Каразіна, пл. Свободи, 6, Харків, Україна, 61022.

Hanna Pavlenko, postgraduate of the Department applied psychology Department of Psychology of Kharkiv Karazin National University, 6 Svobody Sq., Kharkiv, Ukraine, 61022.

Павленко Анна Владимировна, соискатель высшего образования степени доктора философии по психологии 4-го года дневной формы обучения, Харьковский национальный университет имени В. Н. Каразина, пл. Свободы, 6, Харків, Україна, 61022.

ORCID - 0000-0001-6028-4779
avpavlenko@karazin.ua

У статті висвітлено теоретичний аналіз понять «психологічне благополуччя» і «суб'єктивне благополуччя», а також поняття «когерентність» (зв'язність). Наведено результати дослідження взаємозв'язку почуття когерентності й рівня психологічного та суб'єктивного благополуччя. Розглянуто специфіку взаємозв'язку між компонентами когерентності (збагненність, керованість, осмисленість) і показниками благополуччя. Виявлено, що почуття когерентності може виступати фактором забезпечення психологічного благополуччя. Визначено подальші перспективи досліджень психологічного благополуччя.

Ключові слова: благополуччя; психологічне благополуччя; суб'єктивне благополуччя; когерентність; збагненність; керованість; осмисленість

В статье освещён теоретический анализ понятий «психологическое благополучие» и «субъективное благополучие», а также понятия «когерентность» (связность). Приведены результаты исследования взаимосвязи чувства когерентности и уровня психологического и субъективного благополучия. Рассмотрена специфика взаимосвязи между компонентами когерентности (постижимость, управляемость, осмысленность) и показателями благополучия. Выявлено, что чувство когерентности является фактором обеспечения психологического и субъективного благополучия. Определены дальнейшие перспективы исследований в контексте психологического благополучия.

Ключевые слова: благополучие; психологическое благополучие; субъективное благополучие; когерентность; постижимость; управляемость; осмысленность.

The article is devoted to the study of well-being, which is considered as a multi-factorial construct and is described by most scientists in three terms: «subjective well-being», «life satisfaction» and «psychological well-being». The article covers the theoretical analysis of the concepts of «psychological well-being» and «subjective well-being», and also the concept of «coherence». Psychological well-being is considered as a basic dynamic characteristic of a personality, which reflects a subjective assessment by a person of his functioning and potential capabilities. Subjective well-being is considered as an integral system, which consists of the personality's ideas about himself, his life, his relations, capabilities.

The concept of «sense of coherence» is considered as an orientation of a person to what extent a person perceives life as conscious and amenable to control. The empirical study involved 251 people, of whom 197 were women and 54 men, the average age was 27-41. Four test methods and two statistical-mathematical methods were used. The results of the study of the correlation between the sense of coherence and the level of psychological and subjective well-being among students are presented. The specificity of correlation between the components of coherence (comprehensibility, manageability, meaningfulness) and indicators of well-being is considered. A correlation analysis was performed to detect the relationships between the components of a sense of coherence and psychological well-being. For a visual representation, the results obtained are presented in the form of diagrams. Regression analysis was used to study the effect of sense of coherence on psychological well-being. It was revealed that sense of coherence is a factor of ensuring the psychological well-being. Further perspectives for psychological well-being research have been identified. Further perspectives are in clarification of the concept of psychological well-being and the study of the characteristics of the relationship of psychological and subjective well-being with various dispositions of an individual.

Key words: well-being; psychological well-being; subjective well-being; coherence; comprehensibility; manageability; meaningfulness.

Problem statement. Trends in modern society require from an individual a high level of professionalism, conscious activity, maximum activation of their own resources, harmonious development, well-being and emotional health. Currently, Ukrainian society is going through a period of transformation, which covers various spheres of personal life. Social and economic instability jeopardized the mental, psychological and emotional health of our citizens. In this regard, the problem of studying resources and factors of psychological health and well-being is relevant for modern psychology.

The problem of the formation of a healthy person has been a concern for psychologists for a long time, but at every stage of society development the vector of studying these issues changes. The main approach to health, both physical and psychological, has been pathogenesis for a long time, where the origin of the disease and its prevention were studied. Prevention of diseases in the key of pathogenesis is to prevent and eliminate pathogenic factors. The problem of the origin of the disease and the attitude of a person to it within the pathogenesis is practically not considered. Today, the main group of researchers, both theorists and practicing psychologists consider that while the fight against diseases, overcoming complex situations, crisis stages of life, the main focus of attention should be not only on the problem and its solution, but first of all individual's attitude to the problem. Psychologists emphasize the importance of self-confidence and confidence in the efficient use of resources that one possesses. As a result, many researchers are studying salutary thinking, which focuses on the reasons why people remain healthy no matter what. The salutary approach differs from the pathogenic approach which traditionally is used in health care in its orientation. The term salutogenesis consists of two parts: the Latin «salutis», which translates as health, wellbeing and the Greek «genesis», which is interpreted as origin. Thus, salutogenesis deals with the origin of health. On the one hand, salutogenesis relates to the concept of medicine, and on the other hand, to the concept of factors and dynamic interactions that lead to the development and maintenance of health. Israeli-American medical sociologist Aaron Antonovsky [1] introduced the term «salutogenesis» in the 1980s as an additional term for pathogenesis. According to the salutogenesis model, health is not a condition, but a process [5]. In formulating his theory, Antonovsky suggested that a good sense of «context», i.e. a sense of coherence, is an understanding of life's interrelationships that enhances a person's health. In his opinion, the sense of coherence has three main components: comprehensibility, manageability and meaningfulness of the situation.

A comprehensibility is interpreted as an assessment of the cognitive meaning of the stimuli a person is faced by, the degree of structuredness, consistency and orderliness of the surrounding information. A person tries to perceive all situations in life as comprehensible, such that they can be comprehended and solved.

Manageability means the ability of a person to consider his or her own resources as sufficient to solve the arising difficulties. It is worth noting that this includes both the internal (personal) resources of the individual that he or she has at his or her disposal and the external resources that he or she can count on (help from relatives and friends).

Meaningfulness characterizes the power of emotional experience of a person in relation to the meaning of his life. Meaningfulness shows the attitude of a person to life's problems and requirements, as well as how actively he or she is ready to solve problems and perceive difficulties as challenges, as new stages of his or her own development. Thus, Meaningfulness indicates that life is not indifferent for person [1; 5].

According to Antonovsky, the sense of coherence has been developing since childhood. Especially when a child's upbringing develops a worldview in which the world looks meaningful, understandable and accessible [1]. The individual level of coherence can change during a lifetime [5]. For example, it can be affected by dramatic changes in living conditions, severe crisis events.

The presence of a high level of sense of coherence means that the individual recognizes that everything on the way makes sense and can be included in the sense of life and understanding of the world around. These people see a certain order in everything that is happening, feel they can understand what is happening, and are convinced that they have the skills, abilities, and resources to control, manage, and help themselves.

In general, the sense of coherence should be understood as a general orientation of individual, which is expressed in how and to what limit a person realizes his or her life as comprehensible, manageable and meaningful. Based on this it can be assumed that a sense of coherence can be a condition of psychological health and well-being.

Wellbeing is commonly interpreted as a multi-factor construct that combines social, cultural, economic, psychological, spiritual and physical factors. Nowadays, scientists use three terms which reflect «well-being» of the individual: «subjective well-being», «satisfaction with life» and «psychological well-being». The American psychologist N. Bradburn [2] developed a theoretical concept for understanding the phenomenon of psychological well-being. He defined psychological well-being as a balance between two complexes of emotions accumulated during a lifetime - positive and negative effects. Further study of the phenomenon of psychological well-being was carried out by E. Diner [3; 4], who introduced the concept of «subjective well-being». Subjective well-being consists of three main components: satisfaction, pleasant affect and unpleasant affect. Despite similar interpretations of the structure of psychological well-being and the structure of subjective well-being, Diner believes that subjective well-being is only a component of psychological well-being [6, P. 618-621]. Russian scientist Sozontov A.E., on the contrary, believes that the three main components of subjective well-being are physical, social and psychological well-being [11, p.107-108]. This approach is consistent with the theory of the inner personality structure of W. James, which contains the physical self, the social self and the spiritual self [10]. Since the physical, psychological and social in the subjective perception are integrated and form a single whole, according to R.M. Shamionov [13], it is advisable to introduce the

concept of social and psychological subjective well-being of a person.

In general, the understanding of subjective well-being is rather vague. In the process of analyzing the works of some scientists [4; 6; 13] it was determined that subjective well-being is commonly understood either as normative well-being, which is defined by external criteria («good», «right» life), or as satisfaction with life, which is based on the person's ideas of «good» life, or as the superiority of positive emotions over negative emotions.

As for the study of the problem of well-being, it is worth noting R.M. Ryan [7], who was actively engaged in the study of well-being and classified all approaches to its understanding into two main directions: hedonistic (from Greek hedone - pleasure) and eudaimonistic (from Greek eudaimonia - bliss, happiness). Such scientists as D. Kaneman [7], N. Bradburn [2; 7], E. Diener [3; 4; 7] should be referred to hedonistic direction. They describe well-being in terms of satisfaction and dissatisfaction. Eudemonistic direction includes K. Riff, A. Waterman, who believe that personal growth is the main and most necessary aspect of well-being [8; 9]. There is no unambiguous approach to the structure of eudemonic well-being at present. The content of eudemonistic well-being is most often presented in the form of a list of positive parameters that are necessary for successful functioning. In the theory of self-determinism [7], eudemonistic well-being is conditioned by the satisfaction of three basic psychological needs: autonomy - the need to be an active creator of one's own life, to determine one's own activity; competence - the need to feel confident in the implementation of one's own activity; and interrelation with other people - the need for close and safe relationships with other people who do not violate the autonomy of the individual and promote the acquisition of competence. Further, K. Riff

studied psychological well-being on the basis of theories of positive psychological functioning [8]. In this concept, the model of psychological well-being is presented in the form of six parameters:

1. Self-acceptance is a positive assessment of yourself and your past.
2. Personal growth - a feeling of continuous growth, self-development, realization of one's potential.
3. The goal in life is a sense of meaning, purpose in life, its orientation.
3. Positive relationships with others - the ability to maintain warm, trusting interpersonal relationships, the ability to love.

5. Environmental management is the ability of an individual to choose or create an environment suitable for his or her mental state.

6. Autonomy - self-determination, independence, self-regulation [8, p.1073-1080]. According to Fesenko P. P. and Shevelenkova T. D., we should also highlight such concepts as «actual psychological well-being» and «ideal psychological well-being». Actual psychological well-being is a person's experience of who he or she believes he or she is. Ideal psychological well-being characterizes potential aspects of personality functioning [12; 14].

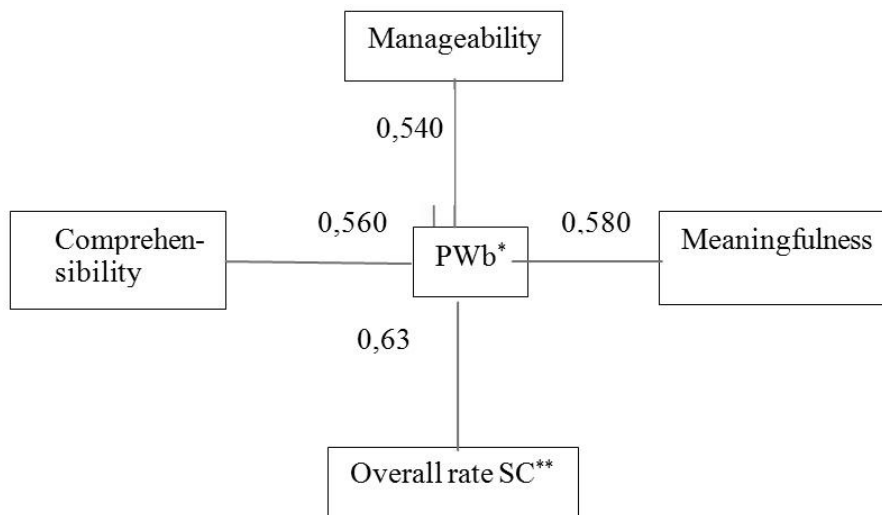
Despite the different definitions of psychological well-being, there has been a recent trend towards the integration of different theories and the complex study of well-being. There are a number of studies that show positive correlations between psychological well-being and subjective well-being, suggesting that these concepts are closely related.

Modern foreign studies (Bormans L, Little B.) conclude that one of the conditions of health and well-being is a sense of coherence and consider its positive effect on the assessment of life and on the feeling of happiness. Russian-language studies on the relationship between a sense of coherence and psychological well-being show that a sense of coherence is a component of psychological health (Reznichenko S.I.), a factor that allows you to maintain internal well-being under the influence of severe stress (Troshikhina I.G), an affective component of vitality (Mitrofanova A.N.). Insufficient coverage of the problem of the relationship of a sense of coherence with various components of well-being remains: personal, subjective, a sense of satisfaction with life. As a result, **the goal** of our study was to study the relationship between sense of coherence and psychological well-being. In our study, we consider psychological well-being as an integral indicator, a combination of elements of personal well-being (K. Riff), emotional and cognitive components.

The study group consisted of 251 people, of which 197 were female and 54 were male ($M_{age} = 27,41$). Participants were provided with a general outline of the study, as well as promised confidentiality and anonymity.

Research methods. For the diagnosis of psychological well-being, the express scale «The scale of psychological well-being of K. Riff», adapted by TD Shevelenkova and P. P. Fesenko; for the diagnosis of the emotional component of well-being, the methodology «The Subjective Well-being Scale (SHB)» was used by G. Peru-Badu, adapted by M.V. Sokolova and for the diagnosis of the cognitive component of well-being, the methodology «Scale of life satisfaction» E. Diener, which is adapted by D.A. Leontiev; to diagnose a sense of coherence, the questionnaire «Sense of Coherence - SOC» by A. Antonovsky was used, translated by M.N. Dymshits, modification E.N. Osin. For mathematical data processing, we used methods of mathematical statistics: Pearson correlation analysis and analysis of variance. Data processing was carried out using the program Statistica 17.

Presentation of the main research data. The correlation analysis revealed the relationship between the components of a sense of coherence and psychological well-being. The obtained results are shown in Figure 1 for better visibility.



* PbW is psychological well-being.

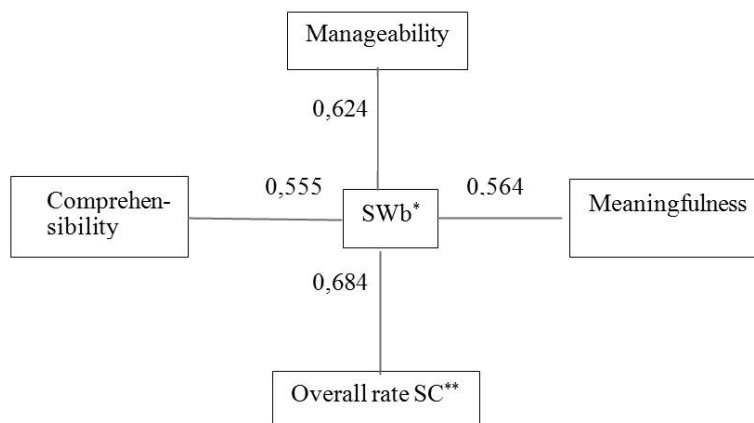
** Sence of coherence

Figure 1. Correlation pleiad of sense of coherence to psychological well-being

On the presented correlation pleiad we see that all components of feeling of connectivity have strong direct correlation with psychological well-being. Thus, the perception of life situations as comprehensible and the ability to consider own resources as sufficient to solve problems contribute to psychological well-being. The interrelation between the components of meaningfulness and psychological well-being is slightly stronger (0,583). Therefore, emotional involvement in life and assessment of the surrounding circumstances contributes to positive emotional experiences, which in this turn contribute to the achievement of psychological well-being. It should also be noted that the relationships obtained during correlation analysis are direct positive, which means that both the components of a sense of coherence have a positive impact on achieving and

strengthening psychological well-being, and psychological well-being has a positive impact on the components of a sense of coherence.

Next, we performed a correlation analysis between the indicators of the sense of coherence and the indicator of subjective well-being (scale of subjective well-being) (Figure 2). The results show a direct positive correlation between all the indicators: overall indicator of sense of coherence and subjective well-being (0,684), comprehensibility and subjective well-being (0,555), manageability and subjective well-being (0,624), meaningfulness and subjective well-being (0,564).



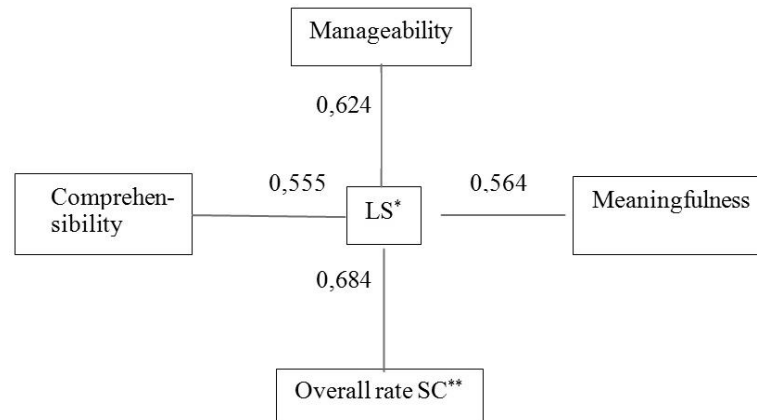
* SWb is subjective well-being (SWb scale).

** Sence of coherence

Figure 2: Correlation pleiad of sense of coherence to «subjective well-being».

We see that all the links are strong enough, but the «manageability» component has the strongest relationship with subjective well-being. This result is explained by the fact that subjective well-being, first of all, reflects the attitude of a person to the possibility of satisfying needs, as well as the ability to adapt to external changes, life events and oneself. Manageability is understood as a person's ability to use his or her own resources to solve difficulties and the belief that these abilities are sufficient to solve life's problems. Thus, manageability and subjective well-being are integral, complementary parts of each other and a developed sense of subjective well-being are likely to imply a sense of coherence.

Finally, we conducted a correlation analysis between the components of a sense of coherence and the indicator of satisfaction with life (Figure 3). Similar results have been received, that is satisfaction with a life has high correlation connections with all components of sense of coherence: comprehensibility (0,319), manageability (0,366) and meaningfulness (0,468).



* LS is life satisfaction

** Sence of coherence

Figure 3: Correlation pleiad of sense of coherence to «life satisfaction».

From figure 3 we see that the strongest connection was found between life satisfaction and the component of meaningfulness (0,468). It proves that both the index of satisfaction with life and the component of sense of coherence characterizes force of emotional experience of the person regarding sense of his own life. Thus, satisfaction with life and a sense of connection complement each other and have mutual influence, and also characterize the attitude of the individual to the problems of life and active involvement in solving these problems.

Then, using the analysis of variance, we of the construction of the regression model, due to which it was found that the sense of coherence is a factor of psychological well-being (beta=0.689, at d=47%). The principle of coherence lies in the statement that all existing is in interrelation, and presence of this human trait testifies to his belief that the world is realized enough and is influenced. In addition, a developed sense of coherence implies that a person has skills, abilities, resources, and the belief that they are able to control and manage what is happening. Thus, the confidence in one's own abilities and the belief that any situation is solvable contributes to the strengthening of psychological well-being.

The research found that there were direct correlations between sense of coherence and well-being (psychological and subjective). Significant positive relationships were obtained between the indicator of a sense of coherence and the indicator of psychological well-being (according to the methodology of K. Riff), the indicator of subjective well-being (according to the methodology of SWB G. Peru-Badu) and the indicator of satisfaction with life (according to the methodology of LS E. Diener). This suggests that a decrease in sense of coherence can lead to a decrease in psychological and subjective well-being and, conversely, the strengthening of sense of coherence components is likely to increase overall level of well-being. A positive connection also indicates that strengthening the components of a sense of coherence is likely to increase the overall level of well-being. These data were mathematically supported by analysis of variance, which showed that a sense of coherence is a factor in psychological well-being and describes 47% of the regression model. The perspectives for further research are the study of connections between psychological and subjective well-being and various personality traits (self-confidence, tolerance and tolerance, vitality), and also the clarification and operationalization of the concept of psychological well-being.

Література

1. Antonovsky A. The salutogenic approach to aging. Lecture held in Berkeley, January 21, 1993. P. 981–982
2. Bradburn N. The Structure of Psychological well-being. – Chicago: Aldine Pub. Co., 1969. 320 p.
3. Diener E. Cross-cultural correlates of life satisfaction and self-esteem. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. 1995. № 68. P. 653–663.
4. Diener E. Subjective well-being. *Psychological Bulletin*. 1984. № 95. Pp. 542–575
5. Eriksson M., Mittelmark, M. The Sense of Coherence and Its Measurement. 2017. DOI: 10.1007/978-3-319-04600-6
6. Lucas R.E., Diener E., Suh E. Discriminant validity of well-being measures. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. 1996. № 71(3). P. 616–628.
7. Ryan, R.M. On happiness and human potentials: A review of research on hedonic and eudaimonic well-being. *Annual Review of Psychology*. 2001. Vol. 52. pp. 141–166.
8. Ryff C.D. Happiness is everything, or is it? Explorations on the meaning of psychological wellbeing. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. 1989. Vol. 57. Pp. 1069–1081.

9. Waterman A.S. Two conceptions of happiness: contrasts of personal expressiveness (eudaimonia) and hedonic enjoyment. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. 1993. Vol. 64. Pp. 678–691
10. Джеймс У. Психология / под ред. Л. А. Петровской. М.: Педагогика. 1991. 368 с.
11. Созонтов А.Е. Гедонистический и эвдемонистический подходы к проблеме психологического благополучия. *Вопросы психологии*. 2006. № 4. С. 105–114.
12. Фесенко П. П. Что такое психологическое благополучие? Краткий обзор основных концепций. *Научные труды аспирантов и докторантов*. М.: Изд-во МГУ. 2005. Вып. 46. С. 35–48.
13. Шамионов Р.М. Критерии субъективного благополучия личности: социокультурная детерминация. *Известия Саратовского университета. Новая серия. Акмеология образования. Психология развития*. 2015. Т.4. № 3. С. 213–219
14. Шевеленкова Т.Д. Психологическое благополучие личности (обзор основных концепций и методика исследования). *Психологическая диагностика*. 2005. № 3. С. 95–130.

References

1. Antonovsky, A. (1993, January 21). The salutogenic approach to aging. *Lecture held in Berkeley*, 981-982.
2. Bradburn, N. (1969) *The Structure of Psychological well-being*. (p.320) Chicago: Aldine Pub. Co.
3. Diener, E. (1995). Cross-cultural correlates of life satisfaction and self-esteem. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 68, 653–663.
4. Diener, E. (1984). Subjective well-being. *Psychological Bulletin*, 95, 542–575.
5. Eriksson, M., Mittelmark, M. (2017). The Sense of Coherence and Its Measurement. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-04600-6>
6. Lucas ,R.E., Diener, E., Suh, E. (1996). Discriminant validity of well-being measures. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 71(3), 616–628.
7. Ryan, R.M. (2001). On happiness and human potentials: A review of research on hedonic and eudaimonic well-being. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 52, 141-166.
8. Ryff, C.D. Happiness is everything, or is it? Explorations on the meaning of psychological wellbeing (1989). *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 57, 1069–1081.
9. Waterman, A.S. (1993). Two conceptions of happiness: contrasts of personal expressiveness (eudaimonia) and hedonic enjoyment. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 64, 678–691.
10. James, U. (1991). Psychology. In Under edition of L.A. Petrovskaya. (p. 368) Moscow: Pedagogy.
11. Sozontov, A.E. (2006). Hedonistic and Eudemonic Approaches to the Problem of Psychological Wellbeing. *Voprosy psikhologii*, 4, 105-114.
12. Fesenko, P.P. (2005). What is psychological well-being? Brief review of the basic concepts. *Research papers of post-graduate students and doctoral students*, 46. Moscow Humanitarian University, 35–48.
13. Shamionov, R.M. (2015) Criteria of subjective well-being of personality: socio-cultural determination. *Izvestia Saratov University. New series. Education Acmeology. Psychology of development*, 4 (3), 213–219.
14. Shevelenkova, T.D. (2005). Psychological well-being of personality (review of basic concepts and research methodology). *Psychological diagnostics*, 3, 95–130.