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## SEPARATION FROM THE PARENTAL FAMILY AS A FACTOR OF PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING OF STUDENTS

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Relevance. Experiencing a separation crisis is an important stage in a person's life. The problem of psychological well-being during the separation crisis of student age has been studied insufficiently, in particular, there is a lack of data on the peculiarities of separation in the intrapsychic space, strategies for overcoming crisis experiences, in particular, separation anxiety. In addition, the interdependence of separation parameters and psychological well-being is not sufficiently studied.

The Aim of the study is to determine the features and interrelationships of psychological manifestations of separation at the intrapersonal level and the characteristics of students' psychological well-being.

Research methods and sample. Psychological Separation Inventory (PSI), Life Style Index (LSI) by R. Plutzky and H. Kellerman, Adult Separation Anxiety Questionnaire (ASA-27), Psychological Well-Being Scale by K. Riff, Life Satisfaction Scale by E. Diener. The study involved 42 students of Ukrainian universities aged 19-21 (26 women and 16 men) in a separation situation.

**Results.** The parameters of psychological separation of students from their parents, indicators of separation anxiety and ego-defense, representing psychological separation at the intrapersonal level, as well as their correlations and correlations, are determined. The characteristics of psychological well-being and life satisfaction of the subjects are shown. The correlations between the components of psychological well-being and separation from parents of the studied students are revealed.

**Conclusions.** The study revealed a fairly harmonious psychological separation of the studied students with a greater separation from the father than from the mother. Indicators of separation components characterize separation in the field of making and implementing life decisions while maintaining some commonality in views on the world and life. At the intrapsychic level, psychological separation is manifested by high and medium-level separation anxiety, which is inversely related to the harmony of separation from the mother and the cognitive component of separation from the father. Overcoming separation anxiety occurs through an increase in the overall tension of psychological defenses, primarily through the mechanisms of intellectualization and compensation, which indicates the presence of a separation conflict. The characteristics of students' psychological well-being correspond to the average level in general and by individual components, which indicates a sufficient subjective sense of integrity, meaningfulness and satisfaction with life. Positive correlations of the general indicator of separation with goals in life and psychological well-being, the affective component of separation with positive relationships, the behavioral component of separation with self-acceptance, as well as a negative correlation of the affective component of separation with life satisfaction were found.

**Keywords:** *personality, student age, psychological separation, anxiety, psychological defense mechanisms, psychological well-being, life satisfaction, correlation analysis.*

### **Сепарація від батьківської сім'ї як чинник психологічного благополуччя студентів**

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Актуальність. Переживання сепараційної кризи особистості є важливим етапом у житті людини. Проблема психологічного благополуччя особистості у період сепараційної кризи студентського віку вивчена недостатньо, зокрема бракує даних щодо особливостей прояву сепарації у інтрапсихічному просторі, стратегії подолання кризових переживань, зокрема сепараційної тривоги. Крім того, недостатньо вивченою виявляється взаємодетермінація параметрів сепарації та психологічного благополуччя.

Мета дослідження полягає у визначенні особливостей та взаємозв'язків психологічних проявів сепарації на внутрішньо-особистісному рівні та характеристик психологічного благополуччя студентів.

Методи. Опитувальник «Psychological Separation Inventory» (PSI), «Індекс життєвого стилю» (LSI) Р. Плутчик, Х. Келлерман, Опитувальник сепараційної тривоги дорослих «Adult Separation Anxiety Questionnaire, ASA-27»), «Шкала психологічного благополуччя» К.Ріффа, «Шкала задоволеності життям» Е. Дінера. У дослідженні брали участь 42 студенти українських ВНЗ у віці 19-21 рік (26 жінок та 16 чоловіків), що перебувають у сепараційній ситуації.

Результати. Визначено параметри психологічної сепарації студентів від батьків, показники сепараційної тривоги та егозахисту, що репрезентують психологічну сепарацію на внутрішньо-особистісному рівні та їх співвідношення й кореляції. Показано характеристики психологічного благополуччя й задоволеності життям досліджуваних. Виявлено кореляційні зв'язки між компонентами психологічного благополуччя та сепарації від батьків досліджуваних студентів.

Висновки. Виявлено достатньо гармонійну психологічну сепарацію досліджуваних студентів із більшим відокремленням від батька ніж від матері. Показники компонентів сепарації характеризують відокремлення у сфері прийняття та реалізації життєвих рішень при збереженні деякої спільності у поглядах на світ та життя. На інтрапсихічному рівні психологічна сепарація

*виявляється сепараційною тривогою високого та середнього рівню, що має зворотній зв'язок із гармонійністю сепарації від матері та когнітивним компонентом сепарації від батька. Подолання сепараційної тривоги відбувається через підвищення загального напруження психологічних захистів, перш за все, через механізми інтелектуалізації та компенсації, що показує наявність сепараційного конфлікту. Характеристика психологічного благополуччя студентів відповідає середньому рівню в цілому та за окремими компонентами, що свідчить про достатнє суб'єктивне самовідчуття цілісності, осмисленості та задоволення життям. Встановлено позитивні кореляції загального показнику сепарації із цілями в житті та психологічним благополуччям, афективного компоненту сепарації - із позитивними відношеннями, поведінкового компоненту сепарації – із самоприйняттям, а також негативну кореляцію афективного компоненту сепарації із задоволеністю життям.*

**Ключові слова:** *особистість, студентський вік, психологічна сепарація, тривога, механізми психологічного захисту, психологічне благополуччя, задоволеність життям, кореляційний аналіз.*

**Introduction.** Modern research tends to study the positive aspects of human life. The most global concept that reflects various aspects of the positive functioning of individuals is the category of psychological well-being, which is traditionally distinguished by eudemonic, associated with the meaningfulness of life and assessment of functioning in the context of the realization of potential, and hedonic, which focuses on pleasure as the result of a balance of affects, approaches (Rahmani, Gnoth & Mather, 2018). Scientific achievements on the problem of psychological well-being are associated with the allocation of its structure and functions (Serdiuk, 2017), factors of formation (Pakhol, 2017), and features at different stages of ontogeny, including student age (Kramchenkova & Chursina, 2020). At the same time, the study of crisis stages of personality development in the context of psychological well-being is represented by single works (Hryniv, 2013).

It is the student years that are most often associated with the experience of a separation crisis. During the period of entering a university and separation from their parental family, young people face many challenges, including adaptation to new living conditions,

increased responsibility for themselves and the future. It is during this period that separation activity increases significantly due to social factors, because the separation situation at the intrapsychic level has the psychological task of finally separating the "I" and starting an independent responsible life. In modern research, psychological separation from parents in studenthood is considered mainly at the emotional, cognitive, and behavioral levels (Moral, Chimpén-López, Lyon & Adsuar, 2021), as well as through the introduction of the construct "separation style" (Ponappa, Haring & Day, 2014). The conditions of separation from parents cause additional emotional stress, and disruption of the process of psychological separation, its disharmonious, conflictual styles can lead to various psychological problems, worsen social and psychological adaptation, provoke manifestations of anxiety, anger, depression, social isolation, etc (Çiçek I., 2021). The scientific literature emphasizes that the psychological well-being of an individual is one of the key factors in personal growth, academic performance and self-realization of students (Zarytska V. V., 2019), so its study at the stage of the separation crisis is relevant, as it can provide grounds for the development of effective methods of psychological support that will contribute to the formation of mature, responsible and emotionally stable individuals.

The **Aim** of the study is to determine the features and interrelationships of psychological manifestations of separation at the intrapersonal level and the characteristics of students' psychological well-being.

**Methods and sample of the study.** The psychodiagnostics of indicators representing psychological separation at the intrapersonal level in the subjects was carried out using the methods of the Psychological Separation Inventory (PSI), the Adult Separation Anxiety Inventory ASA-27 and the Life Style Index (LSI) by R. Plutchik, H. Kellerman. The analysis of the characteristics of psychological well-being of the individual was revealed using the methods of the "Psychological Well-Being Scale" by C. Ryff and the "Life Satisfaction Scale" by E. Diener. Statistical data processing was carried out using descriptive statistics, frequency and correlation

analysis by Pearson.

The Psychological Separation Inventory (PSI) was developed to study psychological separation from parents by the following parameters: "Separation Style", "Affective Component of Separation", "Cognitive Component of Separation", and "Behavioral Component of Separation", which can be determined in relation to mother and father. High scores indicate "harmonious" characteristics of separation, while low scores correspond to an "incompatible and confrontational" style.

The Adult Separation Anxiety Questionnaire (ASA-27), based on the frequency of the states experienced, allows us to distinguish four levels of separation anxiety: low, medium, high, and very high levels.

The Life Style Index (LSI) by R. Plutchik and H. Kellerman was used to diagnose the types of defense mechanisms: displacement, denial, substitution, compensation, reaction formation, projection, intellectualization (rationalization), regression, and intensity of psychological defense. The results are processed by converting raw scores into percentiles, which allows for a correct comparison of the level of expression of individual indicators and the construction of appropriate ego-defense profiles. Since all defense mechanisms are based on inhibitory mechanisms that arise to overcome feelings of anxiety and fear, their definition is complementary in the context of a separation situation and the identification of ways to overcome separation anxiety.

The C. Ryff Psychological Well-Being Scale allows to identify both a general indicator of psychological well-being and its main components on the scales of autonomy (self-determination and independence), competence (sense of mastery), personal development (realization of one's potential), positive relationships (warm and trusting relationships with others), life goals (sense of direction), and self-acceptance (positive attitude towards oneself and one's past).

The E. Diener Life Satisfaction Scale allows to determine the level of satisfaction with one's own life as one of the main components of the subjective well-being of a person.

The study involved students of Ukrainian universities aged 19-21 who are in a separation situation and are characterized by a similar socio-economic status, living in similar socio-psychological conditions of life and study. The total sample size is 42 people, including 26 women and 16 men.

**Results.** The results of the study of the parameters of psychological separation from the parental family are presented in Fig. 1. The overall indicator of psychological separation of the studied students corresponds to the average level, which indicates a small representation of negative or ambivalent feelings, thus, a fairly harmonious separation.

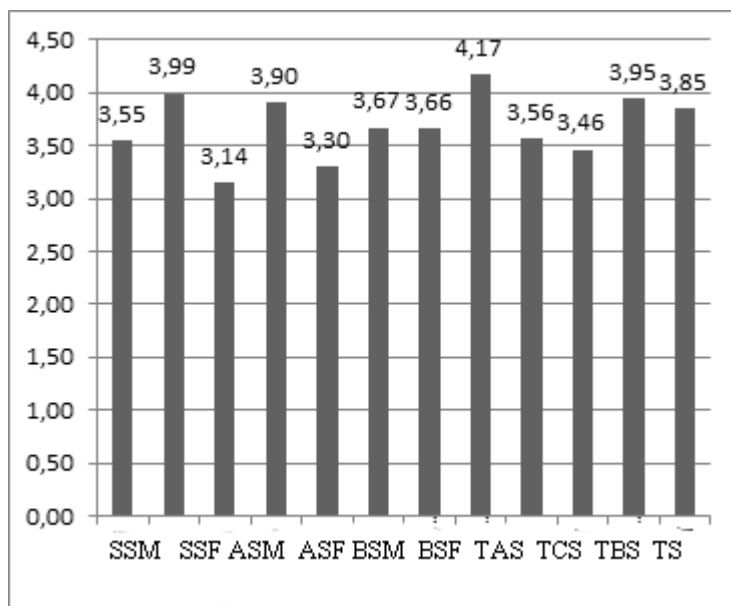


Figure 1. Indicators of psychological separation from parents.

Note: SSM - Separation style from mother

SSF - Separation style from father

ASM - Affective component of separation from mother

ASF - Affective component of separation from father

*BSM - Behavioral component of separation from mother*

*BSF - Behavioral component of separation from father*

*TAS - Total affective component of separation*

*TCS - Total cognitive component of separation*

*TBS - Total behavioral component of separation*

*TS - Total separational parameter*

At the same time, the separation style revealed a greater separation from the father than from the mother, both in general and by individual components. Thus, the studied students show a greater need for approval and emotional closeness from their mothers, less differences in their outlook on life and significant attitudes, and greater dependence on their mothers than on their fathers in decision-making. Such data may be related to the greater involvement of mothers in upbringing and interaction at earlier stages of socialization. According to the generalized indicators of the components of separation from parents, the behavioral component was most pronounced, and the cognitive component was the least pronounced, indicating greater separation in the area of making and implementing life decisions while maintaining some commonality in views on the world and life.

A student-age personality can rarely realize fear in a situation of separation from the parental family, more often experiencing various fears in different areas and tabooing the topic of separation in the intrapsychic space, which can make social adaptation difficult. The study of separation anxiety revealed the following distribution of levels ( $\chi^2_{Emp} = 26.76, p < 0.01$ ): low level of separation anxiety is represented in 11.9% of students, medium - in 50.0%, high - in 38.1%. Thus, the data obtained indicate that 38.1% of respondents experience pronounced anxiety and significant frustrating limitations due to real or imagined psychological separation, which is associated with excessive family closeness and can affect the formation of new interpersonal relationships and satisfaction in close relationships with objects of secondary preferences. Separation anxiety can be triggered by excessive stress before and during separation from a loved one, and excessive fear of being alone all the time. The correlation

analysis shows an inverse relationship of separation anxiety with the harmony of the style of separation from the mother (-0.434, at  $p < 0.05$ ) and the cognitive component of separation from the father (-0.342, at  $p < 0.05$ ).

Separation anxiety can be overcome through the activation of personality defense mechanisms. The results of the analysis of the correlation between the levels of separation anxiety and the overall tension of psychological defense mechanisms are presented in Table 1. The data obtained indicate the presence of significant differences in the representation and distribution of characteristics ( $\chi^2_{Emp} = 10.01, p < 0.01$ ).

Table 1

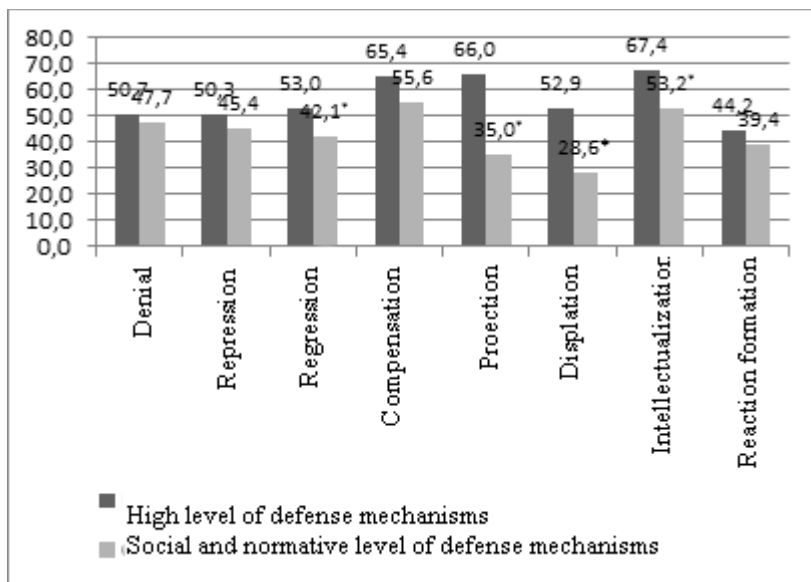
**Distribution of the levels of intensity of psychological protection of the individual depending on separation anxiety**

Levels of psychological defenses' tension	Frequencies by separation anxiety levels (%)		
	High	Moderate	Low
High	26	21	10
Social and normative	12	29	2
$\chi^2_{Emp}$	10,01		
p	<0,01		

The frequency analysis of the data obtained shows that at high levels of separation anxiety, an increased level of overall tension of psychological defense mechanisms dominates, at medium levels, social and normative mechanisms prevail, and at low levels, an increased level of defense prevails. Thus, high and low levels of separation anxiety correlate with an increase in the overall tension of the psychological defense mechanism of the individual, which indicates the presence of a separation conflict at the external or internal level, the experience of which requires the utilization of negative emotions.

In general, intellectualization (61.3 percentile) and compensation (61.2 percentile) were the dominant psychological defense mechanisms in the sample, which reflects the prevalence of

constructive psychological defenses of the studied students. In other words, overcoming frustration and negative emotions, including separation anxiety, occurs mainly through the search for intellectual forms of problem solving, overthinking them, and attempts to find a suitable replacement, most often through fantasizing or over-satisfaction in other areas. The severity of individual types of defense mechanisms, taking into account the overall intensity of psychological defense, is presented in Fig. 2.



**Fig. 2. Types of psychological defense mechanisms depending on the overall intensity of defenses.**

Note: \* significance of differences at  $p < 0.05$

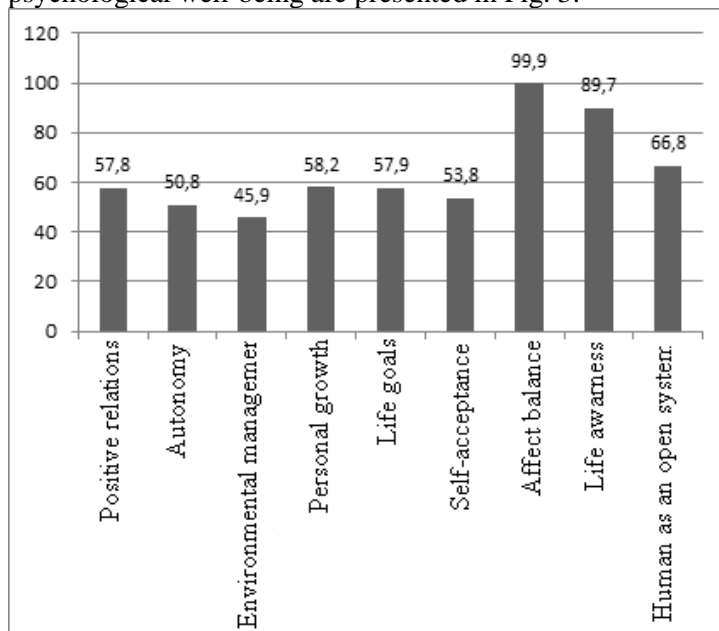
Students with a high level of overall psychological defense intensity (57.1% of the sample) compared to students with a socially normative level of overall psychological defense intensity (42.7% of the sample) have significantly higher rates of such types of ego defense as regression, projection, substitution, and intellectualization.

According to the results of measuring life satisfaction as a sign of psychological well-being, the following distribution of levels was

found in the studied students ( $\chi^2_{Emp} = 31.34, p < 0.01$ ) - 2.4% of respondents are "completely satisfied with life", 23.81% - "satisfied with life", 38.1% - "almost satisfied with life", 7.1% - "undecided, have a neutral attitude", 16.7% - "almost dissatisfied with life", 11.9% - "dissatisfied with life", "extremely dissatisfied with life" were not found. Thus, partial satisfaction with life was prevalent (38.1%).

The analysis of the data obtained to identify the overall level of psychological well-being (the average value of the total index for the sample is  $344.1 \pm 28.2$ ) reflects its average level, which indicates a sufficient subjective sense of integrity, meaningfulness of life and self-realization in the relevant life circumstances and social challenges.

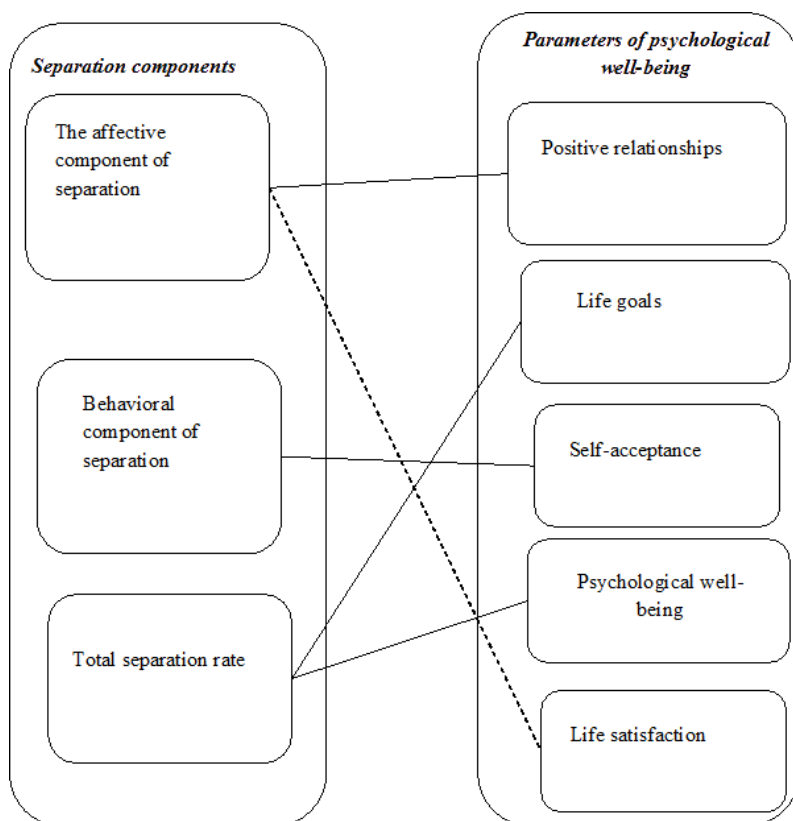
The results of determining the severity of the components of psychological well-being are presented in Fig. 3.



**Fig. 3. Indicators of psychological well-being**

According to the data obtained, the values of indicators for all components of psychological well-being correspond to the average level. Higher scores on the main scales are obtained by indicators of personal growth, positive relationships, and goals in life, which reflects the desire for self-realization, openness to new things, a sense of purposefulness in life, and the desire to build satisfactory trusting relationships and care for others. The lowest scores are on the environmental management scale, which reflects some difficulties in organizing everyday life and a sense of reduced control over the surrounding reality. Of the additional scales, the highest values are obtained by the "balance of affect" indicators, and the lowest - by the "person as an open system" indicators, which shows a certain underestimation of one's own positive qualities and achievements and the ability to overcome negative life circumstances and difficulties in integrating individual aspects into a coherent realistic structure. The data obtained are natural in the context of the age characteristics of students and the separation situation.

To study the relationship between the components of psychological well-being and separation from parents of the studied students, a correlation analysis was conducted (Fig. 4). According to the data, the overall separation score is positively related to life goals and psychological well-being (0.311 and 0.357, respectively, at  $p < 0.05$ ). Thus, harmonious, non-contradictory separation has a positive effect on the full functioning of the individual, the dynamic balance of the person with the environment, and the ability to set and achieve one's own life goals. The affective component of separation shows a direct correlation with positive relationships (0.440, at  $p < 0.05$ ), and the behavioral component of separation with self-acceptance (0.346, at  $p < 0.05$ ). Thus, a high level of need for emotional support and approval encourages the establishment of emotionally meaningful, trusting relationships, and the ability and desire to make decisions and implement meaningful choices independently increases self-acceptance and positive self-attitude.



**Figure 4. Correlations between psychological components of separation and student well-being**

Note: - direct correlation, ---- negative correlation.

At the same time, a negative correlation of the affective component of separation with life satisfaction was found ( $-0.422$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), which reveals the emotional experience of separation as a factor in increasing dissatisfaction due to the stress experienced by young people in situations of interaction with their parental family.

**Conclusions.** The study revealed a fairly harmonious psychological separation of the studied students with a greater separation from the father than from the mother. Indicators of

separation components characterize separation in the field of making and implementing life decisions while maintaining some commonality in views on the world and life. At the intrapsychic level, psychological separation is manifested by high and medium-level separation anxiety, which is inversely related to the harmony of separation from the mother and the cognitive component of separation from the father. Overcoming separation anxiety occurs through an increase in the overall tension of psychological defenses, primarily through the mechanisms of intellectualization and compensation, which indicates the presence of a separation conflict. The characteristics of students' psychological well-being correspond to the average level in general and by individual components, which indicates a sufficient subjective sense of integrity, meaningfulness and satisfaction with life. Positive correlations of the general indicator of separation with goals in life and psychological well-being, the affective component of separation with positive relationships, the behavioral component of separation with self-acceptance, as well as a negative correlation of the affective component of separation with life satisfaction were found.

Research aimed at studying the issue of gender peculiarities of psychological separation in middle adulthood may also be promising.

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