

PERSONALITY AND THE QUALITY OF LIFE OF THE STUDENTS IN ŁOMŻA

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Abstract: Personality and well-being of an individual have recently been the most widely researched notions in psychology. The following article concerns the characteristic of the students in Łomża according to the Big Five Model introduced by R.R.McCrae and P.T. Costy, fear as a trait and state as well as satisfaction with life, taking into consideration differences connected with sex. The research conducted on 100 students of Lomza State University of Applied Sciences helped to find differences in the researched features among female and male students. It has been discovered that the studying women have a higher level of neuroticism and satisfaction with life than the studying men. The presented research has an introductory purpose and can serve for further, more detailed analysis of the subject.

Key words: personality, quality of life, students

A person is an active living creature. At every stage of life, one undertakes actions, which serve to fulfill one's needs, desires as well as to acquire knowledge, abilities and to achieve the set objectives. In childhood, the main activity of a person is fun, in adolescence it is learning and in adulthood – work [1]. Due to this, a special period, which this article is devoted to, is the period of studies, understood as time of intensive learning and shaping a new period in life on the way to professional activity. Therefore, it would be interesting to create personal characteristic of a student as well as to estimate the level of well-being experienced by him.

The best known model of personality and at the same time the most frequently used in psychological research, is the five factor model of personality (FFM – the Big Five) introduced by R. R. McCrae and P. T. Costy [2,3]. The Big Five Model assumes that there are five personality traits: extraversion, neuroticism, conscientiousness, agreeableness and openness to new experience, where each of these traits has two poles [3,4]. Extraversion concerns the quality and a number of social interactions, activities as well as charging with positive emotions. On the other end of the extreme, there is introversion, which can be described as avoiding closer relations, controlling one's own behaviour. Neuroticism is emotional lability, maladjustment, emotional instability and therefore its second dimension is emotional stability, balance. Agreeableness refers to positive versus negative attitude towards people. Conscientiousness, on the other hand, concerns organization, persistence and motivation. Therefore, the second dimension of conscientiousness is the lack of all those features. The last of the traits is openness to new experience, characterized by cognitive curiosity and searching for experience. Lack of openness will be typical of

individuals who are conservative in behavior and conventional [4–8]. All the aforementioned traits are relatively constant and to a great extent genetically conditioned. There exist differences in traits included in the Big Five according to age, sex, or undertaken activities. The research reveals that women, independent of their age, are characterized by higher level of neuroticism, conscientiousness are agreeableness than men [4,5].

In psychological terms, the well-being of an individual includes the positive feelings, states and experiences assessed from the perspective of an individual [9]. Well-being is determined by the quality and number of positive feelings that one experiences, the number of negative emotions and satisfaction with life [10,11]. It is a general assessment of one's whole life, its outcome and evaluation [10,11]. Satisfaction with life, constituting a part of well-being, is the same as happiness [12]. Satisfaction grows during life, but depends on sex, experience and undertaken activities and is much more flexible than personality, which is to a great extent genetically conditioned [5,9]. Well-being includes also emotional states. What seems to be important here is the level of experienced fear, which is the main emotion determining the activities undertaken by an individual as well as the quality of these activities [13]. Spielberger distinguishes fear as a state (variable in time and dependant on the situation) as well as fear as a trait (permanent characteristic of an individual). Eysenck indicates the vulnerability of some individuals to mood swings and anxiety, which occur, depending on personality traits, e.g. in relation to neuroticism. These are usually women who experience greater fear levels, but it also depends on many other biological and social conditioning [12,14,15].

In the years 2012-2015, the study was conducted on 100 students (54 women and 46 men) of Lomza State University of Applied Sciences (PWSiP) in the field of personality and well-being. The research was carried out on the first year and first semester students of Social Work, English Philology, Nursing and Dietetics, either from part-time and full-time courses. The examined students were from 19 to 38 years of age (average 24.32). The research was done with the use of the questionnaire method, with the set of three tests, which included: the NEO Five Factor Inventory by R. R. McCrae i P. T. Costy, the Satisfaction with Life Scale – SWLS by E. Dienera, R. A. Emmons, R. J. Larsena, S. Griffina and the State – Trait Anxiety Inventory – STAI by C. D. Spielbergera, R. L. Gorsucha and R. E. Lushene. Thanks to them, it was possible to measure personality traits according to the PMO by Costy and McCrae, fear as a trait and fear as a state as well as satisfaction with life. It was assumed that the main objectives of the research were to examine the intensity of the studied personality traits and features of well-being as well as to determine sexual differences in the examined group. In order to achieve the set objectives, the descriptive statistics and statistical analysis were prepared, with the one-way MANOVA analysis for all the personality and well-being traits (explaining variable: sex). The analysis was conducted with the use of SPSS 23 program [16]. The results are presented in the Tables 1 and 3 as well as in Fig. 1.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics for the examined group of studying women (N=54).

Properties	Min.	Max.	Mean
SWLS	13.00	32.00	23.57
STAIX1	23.00	60.00	37.00
STAIX2	20.00	60.00	42.72
N	8.00	37.00	22.62
E	12.00	41.00	30.09
O	14.00	40.00	26.50
A	15.00	44.00	29.81
C	18.00	47.00	33.12

Table 2: Descriptive statistics for the examined group of studying men (N=46).

Properties	Min.	Max.	Mean
SWLS	12.00	34.00	21.34
STAIX1	20.00	67.00	36.67
STAIX2	22.00	66.00	41.39
N	4.00	36.00	19.82
E	17.00	42.00	30.19
O	15.00	38.00	25.97
A	22.00	40.00	31.23
C	19.00	48.00	33.82

Table 3: Significant differences in the level of personality and well-being characteristics for the group of studying women and studying men.

Properties	Women	SD	>/<	Men	SD	F (1, 98)	p	eta2
SWLS	23.57	4.61	>	21.34	4.98	5.36	.023	.052
N	22.62	7.00	>	19.82	6,60	4.19	.043	.041

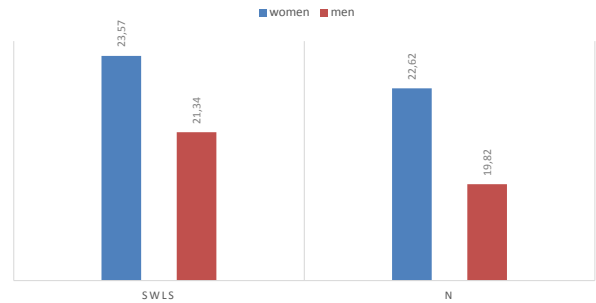


Fig. 1: Significant differences in the level of personality and well-being characteristics for the group of studying women and studying men.

The same symbols were used in all the tables and figures: neuroticism (N), extraversion (E), conscientiousness (A), agreeableness (C), openness to new experiences (O), fear as a trait (STAIX2), fear as a state (STAIX1) and satisfaction with life (SWLS).

The analysis of results allowed to assume (according to the test norms) that in both investigated groups, the level of all the traits - neuroticism, extraversion, conscientiousness, agreeableness and openness to new experience – places itself in the group of average results [4]. The level of fear as a trait and fear as a state is also on an average level [14]. Satisfaction with life, just as the rest of the traits, holds also an average result in both groups [12]. It can also be added that the substantial differences between female and male students exist only in the level of neuroticism and satisfaction with life. Women are characterized by higher level of neuroticism than men ($F(1, 98) = 5.36; p < .05; eta2 = .052$). This result is not surprising. In most of the previously conducted research, women revealed a higher level of this trait. Women are less emotionally stable [4,5]. At the same time, however, women have greater satisfaction with life ($F(1, 98) = 4.19; p < .05; eta2 = .041$). They are happier and more pleased than men. It happens in spite of a higher level of neuroticism, which is strongly and negatively correlated with the level of the quality of life [4, 9, 12].

The research conducted on the students of PWSIP in Lomza helped to outline the characteristic of these students. However, it should be highlighted that it is not a comprehensive description but rather one that activates cognitive curiosity and allows to arrange further studies. It would be useful to review a greater number of traits, on a bigger study group and to control more social parameters,

such as e.g. the type of chosen faculties. It would be worth conducting longitudinal studies that help to define mechanisms that lead to the discovered differences. The subject seems to be important due to the possibility of making use of the results when creating educational proposals, but also recreational ones for students attending Polish universities.

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