

Socio-Adaptive Dimension of Students' Personal Space

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Abstract

Psychological literature presents such notions as "living space," "mental image," "psychological space," etc.; however, only a few pieces of research practically view the modal content of students' spatial organization within the limits of their social and adaptive security. Therefore, it is essential to develop empirical programs for studying the modal features of students' personal space in a socio-adaptive dimension. The article aims to introduce and apply conceptual and methodological support for studying the issue mentioned above; explain the psychological content of modal signs of students' personal space in a socio-adaptive dimension. The following methods were used to conduct the research: theoretical (analysis, synthesis, comparison, abstraction, systematization, and generalization); empirical (observation and conversation); mathematical statistics (Kruskal-Wallis H Test). Data were processed using SPSS Statistics software, version 13.0. One hundred fifty-seven students aged 18 to 25 were invited to participate in research. After specifying the study stages, defining strategies and applying various psychodiagnostic methods, the results were as follows: a) Students with a high level of personal space sovereignty (45.9 % of testees) demonstrated profound control over life; it indicates excellent socio-psychological adaptation and mental well-being of an individual, combined with high standards of autonomy and self-identity; b) Students with a medium sovereignty level (38.2 % of testees) expressed an uncertain position related to determining their personal space. It is often associated with social factors of an individual's self-realization, which impede and even destroy the potential establishment of a holistic, full-fledged own space; c) Students with a low level of psychological space sovereignty (15.9 % of testees) showed the signs of deprivation; such young people might experience alienation and fragmentation of their own life, complications in the search for the object of identification.

Keywords

Students; Modality; Personal Space; Adaptation; Sovereignty



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INTRODUCTION

Age and socio-psychological characteristics of the youth demonstrate that the process of students' socialization is a dynamic phenomenon; it helps the younger generation to enter a so-called social sphere, where personal space plays a

leading role. Numerous theoretical concepts presented in psychological literature use such notions as "living space", "image of the world", "self-image", "subjective space", and "psychological space". However, only a few pieces of research at a practical level view the modal

content of students' spatial organization within the limits of their social and adaptive security. Therefore, it is essential to develop theoretical principles and empirical programs for studying the modal features of students' personal space in a socio-adaptive dimension.

The article aims to generalize the theoretical and methodological achievements of the mentioned problem described in socio-psychological literature; develop and implement conceptual and practical methodological support for studying the margins of students' personal space. Finally, the paper substantiates the psychological content of modal signs of the students' own space in a socio-adaptive dimension.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Age characteristics of the youth contain a range of psychological forms related to cognitive, motivational, behavioral, and emotional spheres. Nevertheless, one of the leading roles is given to an establishment of personal space margins to set up a stable internal position. It is during this period that an individual's views on social phenomena are being formed, and a young person takes part in various social activities.

The peculiarities of students as a group are revealed in the studies of different researchers (Virna, 2014; Koshyrets, 2010; Maksymenko, 2013; Serbin, 2018; Erikson, 1996). However, students as a unit cannot be fully understood and described due to their mobility and effects caused by social changes according to Y. Serbin students make up a specific social group with its own life, working conditions, behavior, psychology, and values; therefore, young people have to be studied within the context of their lifestyle (Serbin, 2018). At this age, students go through an active process of developing social maturity as readiness for self-determination, both personal and professional. It is a result of the interaction between sociogenic needs and environmental values. In this way, an individual is embedded in a holistic system of a particular society. The indicators of social maturity include systematic knowledge about the world and the integrity of worldview; solid professional choice and high motivation to achieve the targets; ability to control one's behavior, adaptation in society, and self-realization. An individual must show readiness to take care of health under intensive conditions of study and work, as well as a willingness to create a family; demonstrate the

sustainability of socio-moral orientations, civic position, and potential of personal spiritual improvement.

On the other hand, developmental and pedagogical psychologies describe the cases of asocial behavior (aggression, vandalism, theft, etc.) among adolescents. It was caused by a particular deprivation situation that intruded personal space, ruined the sovereignty of territory and things and, as a result, led to the psychological destruction of a person as an individual (Hoshovskyi, 2008). Such features of a spatial organization are only an integral part of a general understanding of personal space, defined as a form of psychological reality reflection, and as a system of individual's relationship with an outside world at a specific time.

K. Abulhanova-Slavskaya notes that self-determination is both the process and result of the person's choice of priorities, goals, and means of self-realization in specific life circumstances (Abulhanova-Slavskaya, 1991). Transforming a student into an individual interested in a self-change predetermines the further process of becoming a professional, capable of building and developing his/her life. Cultural and historical factors, such as social spheres, social roles, and

expectations of society, as well as person's intrinsic peculiarities, specifying his/her capabilities, abilities, and needs, influence the formation of personal space. All these aspects are interconnected and interdependent; specific facts prove that socio-psychological changes result in either a positive or a negative transformation of the structures of the young person's living space.

E. Erikson treats the process of social development in unity with the mechanisms of group interaction. He defines the former as a sequence of psychological crises. The central and common feature throughout all critical periods of individual's development is a desire of self-identity. However, young people experience conflict between the creation of individuality and so-called identity diffusion. It is a time when a person either realizes own uniqueness or feels uncertainty related to slightly blurry self-identification. Such confusion is characterized by an inability to choose a career or continuing education and can provoke further regressive tendencies in the process of socialization (Erikson, 1996). In any case, a person has always been striving to make life meaningful; therefore, the sense of being is primarily seen in developing "one's Self" (Royce, 1983).

Detailed analysis of S. Nartova-Bochaver's works indicates that the state of psychological space margins determines a person's attitude to the environment. Personal space performs several complex functions-protective, representative, controlling, identifying. Its main characteristics include reality, completeness, coexistence, and interaction of components; thus, psychological space defines the content of social and informational impact on a person (Nartova-Bochaver, 2002). Individual's personal area consists of physical, social, and purely psychological phenomena used for self-identification, such as territory, objects, and social attachments. These phenomena become meaningful within a particular situation and are defended by all physical and psychological means available (Nartova-Bochaver, 2005).

The definition of personal space given by V. Koshyrets is also worth mentioning. He denotes it as one of the components of the multifunctional structure of the students' living space. It provides an adequate level of psychological adaptation, as well as forming of social maturity, self-affirmation, and self-fulfillment (Koshyrets, 2010).

Private space as an integrated psychological entity ensures individual's inviolability, identity preservation, the possibility of self-presentation, and protection against manipulation. This article denotes it as a component of social space, a specific "microcosm" represented by signs of socio-psychological adaptability.

METHODOLOGY

The following methods were used to conduct the research: *theoretical* (analysis, synthesis, comparison, abstraction, systematization, and generalization); *empirical* (observation, conversation, testing using "Sovereignty of the Psychological Space" (SPS) questionnaire by S. Nartova-Bochaver, and "Socio-Psychological Adaptation" methodology (SPA) by K. Rogers and R. Diamond); *mathematical statistics* (Kruskal-Wallis H Test, a nonparametric test used to define statistically significant differences in the expression of individual psychological characteristics between two or more groups); *correlation analysis* aimed to establish the relationship between the diagnosed data. The figures were processed by SPSS Statistics software, version 13.0.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

One hundred fifty-seven students aged

level is characterized by autonomy and emotional stability.

Table 1. Results of the Kruskal-Wallis H Test for defining psychological differences of the personal space sovereignty of the studied student groups

Indicators	Ranks			Chi-Square	df	Sig.
	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3			
The sovereignty of psychological space	299,5	151	44,5	314,48	2	.000**
Sovereignty of a physical body	284,3	149	55,6	292,55	2	.000**
Sovereignty of a territory	278,3	152	73,8	308,67	2	.000**
The sovereignty of things/objects	295,7	161	52,8	288,11	2	.000**
Sovereignty of habits	268,0	153	64,5	308,78	2	.000**
The sovereignty of social relations	288,9	143	42,5	313,78	2	.000**
Sovereignty of values	276,0	169	46,4	272,66	2	.000**

Significance level: ** $p \leq 0,001$.

18 to 25 participated in research voluntarily. The experimental work was carried out in Eastern European National University and included several stages – preparatory, main, and final. The primary method for conducting research was “Sovereignty of the Psychological Space” (SPS) by S. Nartova-Bochaver. It identified three groups of students with different indicators of psychological space sovereignty: high, medium, and low.

45,9 % of testees turned out to have a high level of mental space sovereignty, which means that the students outlined living space as the most significant (close, beloved, interesting) part of their life. An individual with such a high determination

Students with a medium sovereignty level (38.2 % of testees) denoted an uncertain position related to determining their personal space. It is often associated with social factors of an individual’s self-realization, which impede and even destroy the potential establishment of a holistic, full-fledged own space.

Young people with the low level of psychological space sovereignty (15.9 % of testees) showed the signs of deprivation; such students might experience alienation and fragmentation of their own life, complications in the search for the object of identification.

To compare the groups according to pre-established psychological

characteristics, we selected nonparametric method of mathematical statistics, such as Kruskal-Wallis H Test. It is a rank-based test used to define statistically significant differences between two or more groups ($k > 2$). Fundamental indicators of the reliability of the calculations for this criterion are a practical value of "Chi-Square" (X^2 -), the number of degrees of freedom (the "df" row), and the p-level, or the statistical significance of the test – the "Asymp. Sig." row (Byuyul, 2005).

The results of the Kruskal-Wallis H Test application to the formed matrix of psychological space sovereignty empirical data are given in Table 1.

Further analysis is related to the study of indicators of socio-psychological adaptation. For that reason, we used the "Socio-Psychological Adaptation" (SPA) methodology developed by K. Rogers and R. Diamond. The results were as follows: group 1 demonstrated the highest

indicators of adaptation, emotional comfort, and aspiration to dominate; in group 2, the highest rates are recorded on the scale of self-acceptance, acceptance of others, and internality; in group 3 the empirical data indicators were lower than the ones in previous groups.

The results of the Kruskal-Wallis H Test application to the formed matrix of socio-psychological indicators empirical data are given in Table 2.

So, students with a high and medium level of psychological space sovereignty possess an immense adaptability indicator. They are responsible, reliable, and obedient, able to control their own actions and follow previously made decisions, think critically, and rely on themselves. Such students (especially the ones in group 2) have more developed self-acceptance, which is expressed in recognizing their external and

Table 2. Results of the Kruskal-Wallis H Test for defining psychological differences in the socio-psychological adaptation of the studied student groups

Indicators	Ranks			Chi-Square	df	Sig.
	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3			
Adaptation	214,7	184,4	95,1	73,396	2	.000**
Self-acceptance	156,6	196,5	111,2	72,263	2	.000**
Acceptance of others	164,5	199,0	114,0	27,987	2	.000**
Emotional comfort	219,2	208,0	139,0	27,703	2	.000**
Internality	158,4	222,2	95,3	128,007	2	.000**
Aspiration to dominate	193,2	191,3	121,3	26,028	2	.000**

Significance level: ** $p \leq 0,001$.

internal attractiveness and tendency to self-observation (introspection). Acceptance of others helps to create warm relationships with different kinds of people, be more tolerable and open-minded.

Students with a high level of emotional comfort (especially in group 1) always feel free to express themselves. Such young people are optimistic and self-confident; on the other hand, aspiration to dominate may develop an excessive desire for success and public admiration, as well as a superiority complex.

Internality indicator dominant in group 2 testifies that the students have high requirements, but tend to blame themselves for failures.

The generalization of the socio-adaptive dimension of the students' personal space during the period of

professional self-determination requires a detailed study of relations between the diagnosed indicators. That is why it was reasonable to apply correlation analysis. Students with a high level of psychological space sovereignty were positively interconnected with such parameters as "sovereignty of a physical body" and "self-acceptance" ($r=0,24$; $p \leq 0,05$); "sovereignty of a territory" and "self-acceptance"; "sovereignty of a territory" and "acceptance of others", in terms of an attitude towards the world and people ($r=0,39$; $p \leq 0,05$; and $r=0,31$; $p \leq 0,05$); "sovereignty of things/objects" and "emotional comfort" indicator; "sovereignty of habits" and "emotional comfort" ($r=0,34$; $p \leq 0,05$; and $r=0,30$; $p \leq 0,05$).

"Sovereignty of social relations" parameter and "internality" indicator, as

well as "sovereignty of values" and "internality" were negatively interconnected ($r=-0,24$; $p\leq 0,05$; and $r=-0,31$; $p\leq 0,05$). The students of this category are determined and optimistic when it comes to life and professional self-realization.

Testees with a medium level of psychological space sovereignty were positively interconnected with such parameters as "sovereignty of things/objects" and "adaptation" ($r=0,38$; $p\leq 0,05$); "sovereignty of values" and "self-acceptance" in terms of individual's attitude to himself/herself ($r=0,25$; $p\leq 0,05$). However, "sovereignty of a physical body" parameter and "emotional comfort" indicator were negatively interconnected ($r=-0,30$; $p\leq 0,05$).

Young people of the last group – teenagers with a low level of psychological space sovereignty demonstrated the positive interconnection between "sovereignty of habits" and "internality" ($r=0,32$; $p\leq 0,05$); "sovereignty of a physical body" and "aspiration to dominate" ($r=0,30$; $p\leq 0,05$). On the other hand, "sovereignty of objects/things" parameter and "emotional comfort" indicator were negatively interconnected ($r=-0,25$; $p\leq 0,05$).

CONCLUSION

The obtained results demonstrate modal signs of the students' psychological space in a socio-adaptive dimension. Young people with a high level of personal space sovereignty showed real control over the life environment (perception of the physical body, territory, objects, social relations, and values). Such a grade indicates excellent socio-psychological adaptation and mental well-being of a person, as well as high standards of autonomy, independence, and self-identity.

Modal signs of the territory, things, and values sovereignty were marked within the second group of students, who possess more advanced self-acceptance, toleration, and internality, or concern with one's thoughts and feelings. Finally, teenagers of the last category presented modal signs of objects and value sovereignty; the indicators of their social and psychological adaptation were localized in the internality sphere and the desire of emotional comfort.

Although the article does not cover all aspects of the problem, its results prove that the proposed format of determining students' socio-adaptive profile is quite

valid. Further studies might aim to develop applied programs of forecasting and forming the socio-adaptive content of students' psychological space.

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