

# Formation of life-purpose identity in adolescent and junior age

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**Abstract.** Research background: the concept of “identity” is defined as a property of the human psyche to express in a concentrated form how one perceives his/her affiliation to various social, economic, national, professional, linguistic, political, religious, racial and other groups or other communities, or a person’s acceptance of the properties inherent in these groups or communities. The life-purpose identity is a fundamental parameter for defining one’s place in life, one’s value orientations and, above all, for affiliating oneself with the major social values of the modern society. Purpose of the research: theoretical justification, experimental representation and technological support of the process of life-purpose identity formation in adolescent and junior age. Methods: theoretical analysis and study of psychological literature on the problem under discussion, which included generalisation, comparison and systematisation of the obtained data. Empirical data collecting methods (testing). Methods of mathematical statistics ( $\lambda$ -Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, Student t-test, Pearson linear correlation r-coefficient), Leontyev’s life-purpose orientation test, Karpov’s methods for determining the individual measure of reflexivity, Stolín’s and Pantileev’s self-attitude method, Sharov’s ontology of personal myth of life. Results and novelty: the article makes an attempt to delineate the problem-plagued field of one’s life-purpose identity; gives a representation of diagnostic results, substantiates and develops the technological support for the formation of life-purpose identity in adolescent and junior age. The technology of commemorative practices is used as a framework (reading of authentic texts; practice of commemorative speeches; family saga; legendisation of hero’s image; “School is my home”; “Time machine”; “Memory dialogue”; “Planets of childhood”; background commemorative practices; calendar-specific commemorative practices and others).

**Keywords:** identity, life-purpose identity, living through life-purpose milestones, commemorative practices

## 1 Introduction

The problem of formation of one’s life-purpose identity in adolescent and junior age is becoming urgent since age is an important period of personality formation, when a person

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becomes aware of the meaning of life and its goals and lives through different life situations. The onset and progression of life experience have been studied in the Russian national psychology by many psychologists (Vasilyuk, Sharov, and others) as a multifunctional system embedded in man from birth and expressed in one's desire to realise himself/herself in terms of personal and social manifestations.

Problem: what is the dynamics of life experience perception from adolescent to junior age and its role in the formation of individual's life-purpose identity in the above age groups; how does this affect the development of best technologies ensuring due formation of individual's life-purpose identity in the adolescent and junior age.

Purpose of the research – to study the progression of life experience perception from adolescent to junior age and to assess its importance in terms of formation of life-purpose identity in representatives of the above age groups.

Object of the research – formation of life-purpose personal identity in adolescent and junior age.

Subject of the research – dynamics of life experience perception from adolescent to junior age.

## **2 Methods**

The researchers (Erikson [1], Miller [2], Tajfel [3], Turner [4], Glasser [5], Fogelson [6], De Levita [7], Raphael, Xelowski [8], Mead [9], Marcia [10]) consider identity at three levels, distinguishing between social, personal and self-specific identity. The functional structure of identity includes cognitive-semantic, emotional-axiological and pragmatist components [11].

The individual's life-purpose identity represents a process of one's axiological self-determination, awareness (reflection) and realisation of social responsibility (i.e. the answer to the questions: "who am I?" (self-cognition), "who am I with?" (search for a referent group), "what for am I?" (life-purpose reference points), "why me?" (assumption of social responsibility) [12].

To resolve the objectives outlined in the paper, the authors used the theoretical- and empirical research methods. The theoretical analysis and study of the psychological literature covering the handled problem included generalisation, comparison and systematisation of the obtained data; the methods for collecting empirical data (testing); the methods of mathematical statistics ( $\lambda$ -Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, Student t-test, Pearson linear correlation r-coefficient), Leontyev's life-purpose orientation test, Karpov's methods for determining the individual measure of reflexivity, Stolin's and Pantileev's self-attitude method, Sharov's ontology of personal myth of life.

## **3 Results**

To confirm the reliability of differences in the mean values of parameters connected with experiencing life-purpose personality orientations in adolescent and junior age, the authors used the Student t-test, having previously identified the normal distribution of all factors of the studied phenomena by calculating the  $\lambda$ -Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. For all indicators, except for the result as a factor, the level of credible statistical significance is  $p < 0.05$ , which confirms the credible difference in the values of living through life-purpose milestones in adolescent and junior age.

To study the respondents' self-attitude and self-treatment, Stolin's and Pantileev's self-attitude method was used. Based on the presented empirical data, it can be concluded

that it is “self-interest” that prevails in the adolescent and junior age, since the respondents emotionally and meaningfully are convinced of their strength, abilities, energy, independence, ability to control own life and be self-consistent in understanding the own self.

The Student t-test results point to significant differences in the mean values of the individual’s self-attitude factors. This suggests that a group of adolescent respondents differentiates between pros and cons, with internally non-differentiated feeling of “for” and “against”, which characterises the above respondents as having a positive attitude towards themselves. The adolescent respondents experience an accentuated favourable attitude towards their own “Ego” and feel self-worth, “self-esteem” ( $t = -1.877$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). This suggests that a personality in a junior age, to a greater extent than in adolescence, feels successful, well-to-do, believes in himself and in being able overcome his shortcomings.

Having studied the experience of life-purpose milestones and the individual’s self-attitude in the adolescent and junior age, a researcher needs a holistic description of personality characteristics of the tested individuals, on the one hand, and a description of person’s life experience, on the other hand, for which purpose Sharov’s ontology of personal myth of life was used. The group of adolescent respondents shows a prevailing factor of “self-development” in their life practice; this can be explained by the fact that a person at the given age has a try of a life moment by performing actions and deeds. It can be concluded on the basis of the presented empirical data that the respondents of adolescent and junior age demonstrate a high level of self-development.

To reveal the extent of reflexivity in adolescent and junior age, the authors turned to the indicators calculated based on Karpov’s methods for determining the individual measure of reflexivity. The extent of reflexivity was assessed under an interval (metric) scale, which makes it possible to determine due levels. The respondents of adolescent and junior age show a predominant low level of reflexivity, which is typical for half of them.

To confirm the reliability of differences in the level of reflection, the authors used the Student t-test with preliminarily calculations under the  $\lambda$ -Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, with a view to verify the match of the measurement results with the normal distribution. Reflection reliability levels were as follows: “below average” ( $t = -5.824$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), “above average” ( $t = -3.402$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), “average” ( $t = -1.215$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), which demonstrates substantial equality of the respondents’ reflexivity extent, with the exception of the “low level” ( $t = 0.331$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Thus, after completion of the Student t-test, it may be concluded that there are substantial differences in the extent of reflexivity factors in individuals of adolescent and junior age. Hence, one can observe the age-specific dynamics as to the development of reflexivity pronouncement level from adolescent to junior age.

In order to study the dynamics of the sought relationship, the authors applied Pearson’s parametric linear correlation r-coefficient, which made it possible to establish the existing correlation between the factors of experience, life-purpose orientations, reflexivity and self-attitude. The most significant correlation was found for the parameters “goal” and “self-development” of a personality ( $r = -0.471$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). This suggests that the respondents at the given age, when setting goals, lose, living through their future – because a person must be determined to achieve self-development. Young people consider themselves to be the main source and regulator of life. They are less concerned about their future, as they live in the present which is interesting, rich and meaningful for them.

## **4 Discussion**

The problem of formation of individual's life-purpose identity has become significantly exacerbated in the present socio-cultural conditions. Social memory can be reduced to manipulations of space where any individual is able to place memories and, changing the interpretation, withdraw them from the outside world [13, p. 177]. Commemoration is an action referring to the reality of the past which no longer exists [14]. In any community, commemorative practice is a sign that draws individuals into a single common whole, letting them to feel part of a social group. Commemorative practice is always a practice of everyday history, everyday life, a material component of this life which comprises spatial and material characteristics of the "places of memory" [15, p. 83].

## **5 Conclusion**

The analysis of the obtained results made it possible to formulate the following conclusions:

1. Life-purpose orientations represent an integral system of conscious and selective connections reflecting the individual's orientation, presence of life goals, meaningfulness of choices and assessments. Moreover, life-purpose orientations are a result of the individual's personal development.

2. Living through life-purpose milestones is defined as a reflexive process involving virtual living through life-purpose orientations, life events, predicting different options for their solution and experiencing them.

3. The adolescent and junior life periods show differences in the extent of perceived importance of life-purpose orientations: "life goals", "life process", "locus control – life", "locus control – I". Only the "result of life" parameter shows reliable equality of values; in addition, there is a similarity in the experience of pre-living of life-purpose milestones. At the same time, the experience indicator "self-development" is more pronounced in these age groups. Whereas the indicators "fixed achievement" and "lowered importance of personality" are more pronounced in adolescence, the "self-determination" and "elevation" factors are of more importance in the junior age. The differences in self-attitude treated as "self-interest", "global self-treatment" and "self-esteem" are credible, the same as for similarities in other factors.

4. The dynamics of correlation of indicators showing experience through life-purpose milestones from adolescent to junior age is manifested in intensification, strength and nature of relevant ties; however, for adolescents, one can note strong links between the factor of life-purpose orientation "life goals" and the factor of experience through "self-development", as well as the factor of life-purpose orientation "locus control – I" characterised by self-attitude indicators "global self-treatment" and "auto-sympathy"; however, in the junior group one can observe a significant relationship within the indicators of life-purpose orientation covering the factors of reflexivity and self-attitude (self-esteem, self-interest).

5. The sociocultural conditions for the formation of life-purpose identities in adolescent and junior age presuppose the actualisation of commemorative practices: reading of authentic texts (commemoration through books, letters, diaries); the practice of commemorative speeches (commemoration through praise or censure of past generations' deeds); the family saga (commemoration through family identity – a journey across the historical places of the family's life, rituals and traditions of the family holidays, etc.); legendisation of hero's image (commemoration through the study of the ancestors' biography); school is your home (commemoration through local identity by creation of educational centres at school, formation of the school style, creation of a child-adult

community, etc.); commemorative practice “Time Machine” (commemoration through study of local history – museums, memorable places of the city (village), the history of traditional peasant life, etc.); practices of intergenerational “memory dialogue” (commemoration through organisation of intergenerational dialogue on “territories of power” (“places of memory”) – monuments, burial places, other objects of historical memory); “childhood planets” (commemoration through organisation of exhibitions of children’s toys, children’s letters and diaries, photographs, master classes in children’s games of different historical periods); background commemorative practices (commemoration through environment formation, formation of school style, various types of traditional leisure – collecting, crafts, art practices, sports); calendar-based commemorative practices (commemoration through school and family holidays, anniversaries, memorable historical events, cultural events – release of a book, film or play dedicated to a certain historical theme).

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