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Perception of Success in Adolescents

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Abstract

This article shows a relationship between the specific features of teenager perception of success and the experience of the meaningfulness of their life. As a result of the analysis of the data we were able to identify three different types of the teen perception of success: as «social recognition and achievement», as «self-development and self-actualization» and diffused awareness. We were able to uncover a relationship between teen perception of success and teen expectations of how it is possible to planning their future, manage and control their lives. Gender differences in the understanding of success were also identified.

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1. Introduction

In adolescence and early adulthood the nature of development undergoes a change as it transitions to self-development based on building life plans in a time perspective. Teenagers' notions about success is a benchmark in their construction of an image their future. Understanding success impacts their goal-setting and assessment of its achievements, which is essential for forming a teenager's conceptions of himself and his life, his self-esteem and psychological well-being as a whole [1,2]. Correlation of real achievements and results with the ideas of success lays down a basis for building life plans and setting goals.

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In psychology the problem of understanding success has not been studied well enough. Research is mainly devoted to the study of various factors of success: motivation of achievement / avoidance of success and evaluation criteria of success in activities (K.Levin, D.S.MakKlelland, H.Hekhauzen, T.O.Gordeeva, Lapin N.I.) success as a value (M.Rokich, S.Shvarts, E.P.Belinskaya, O.A.Tikhomandritskaya, V.S.Sobkin), personality traits of successful professionals. (A.N Zhuravlev, T.V.Kornilova). It is important to note that many researchers do not even consider the definition of success itself.

At the same time, some domestic researchers suggest similar classifications of success [3,4] which highlight the following features: success as a form of public recognition of one's abilities, talents, genius personality; success as a recognition by authoritative significant others in areas essential to the individual; success as overcoming and self-determination, struggles on the way to realization and self-realization; success as a form of deriving gratification from the process of achievement.

We hypothesized that the specific features of teens' perception of success would be related to an individual's meaningful life orientations, ideas of being able to plan, manage, and control their lives. The aim of this study was to identify the relationship between the features of teenagers' notions of success and the degree of meaningfulness of life.

2. Method

In this study, we used the questionnaire we had elaborated "Success" (adolescent perception of success - APS). It aims to study directly the perceptions of success on the basis of classifications developed in social psychology, dictionary definitions of the word and the results of the pilot study [5,6]. In this technique, teenagers had to express the extent of their agreement with the above characteristics of success on a 5-point scale. To study the teenagers' specific personal characteristics we used the test of meaningful life orientations by Leontiev D.A.[7]

The study involved 399 older adolescent school students (grades 10-11) from Moscow high schools and gymnasiums, they were 227 females and 172 males aged 15 to 17 years, the mean age being 16 years.

3. Results and discussion

A cluster analysis was conducted on the basis of the *Success* questionnaire enabling us to split the subjects into 3 groups, each with their own perception of success (See Table 1).

Table 1. Cluster analysis results.

	Definition of success	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
1.	Luck and good fortune	2.42	2.19	2.46
2.	Popularity in society, fame	2.94	1.49	1.86
3.	Recognition by authoritative and important people	3.18	1.92	2.58
4.	Achievement of goals set	3.65	3.06	3.87
5.	Satisfaction with the process of job realization	2.47	1.64	3.57
6.	Satisfaction with the results of the job done	3.01	2.26	3.75

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