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## Features of Subjective Well-being Characteristic of Teenagers Raised in Two-Parent Families and Orphanages

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### Abstract

The article examines specifics of subjective well-being in teenagers raised in nuclear families and children's homes. While no difference in the degree of subjective well-being pronouncement in both groups was found there exists a difference in the internal structure, namely, components of well-being and peculiarities of their interrelations. On the basis of the data obtained empirical typology of teenagers' subjective well-being is developed classifying "Deficit-compensated in schooling", "Unmotivated trouble-free", "Didactic-deficit", "Deficit-uncompensated" and "Complementary" types.

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*Key words:* orphaned teenagers, subjective well-being, deprivation, empirical typology.

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### 1. Introduction

Social abandonment, child neglect and homelessness have become one of the most serious problems of the Russian society posing a real threat to national security. Social and psychological parameters of social interaction largely depend on the type of culture, as well as on certain behavioural strategies related to national and mental traits [1]. Since 2007 the growth of orphans and children without parental support in number has stopped, however, the problem has not lost its significance. It is no surprise that for some years child abandonment has been one of the major public and political concerns. Hence, both tendencies in the dynamic of homeless children' number and changes in social policy addressing orphans problems' and their fostering determine the topicality of the issue making child care and well-being a priority.

Over the recent years a lot of surveys involving children from orphanages have been conducted. It has been proved that children exposed to stress events experience higher risks, emotional and psychological deprivation

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[2]. S. Provence and R.E. Lipton [3] stressed that children brought up in child welfare centers develop attachment behavior' arrest. The orphanage leavers' research conducted by N.K. Radina and T.N. Pavlycheva [4] revealed deformation of the two key spheres of human existence – emotional and social: attachment avoidance and danger/ threats expectations. The smaller the child is and the longer deprivation lasts, the less hope remains to eliminate all the consequences completely. M.D. Ainsworth [5] pointed out that even little deprivation experience with no apparent after-effects has, at least, one hidden consequence, namely, higher “vulnerability” in case it happens again, or something else goes wrong. According to J. Laugmeier and Z. Matejcek [6], if deprivation moments are intense and long-lasting, children demonstrate regressive traits: they do not eat, speak, and play on their own; they develop somewhat “simplified” attitude to people: they either turn away avoiding conversations, or become importunate, restless, engaged in superficial contacts. V.N. Oslon [7] shows that lack of parent/child relationships prevents orphans from shaping positive parental representation, facilitates the formation of victim identity, self-representation of the one deserving aggression and punishment.

Studies of the Russian psychologists strongly suggest that children raised in orphanages have certain specific features: non-formedness of inward, ideal, subjective elements of the psychic structure; specific mental coherence; peculiar motivatedness of behavioral external situations [8]. Orphans are characterized by high risk of social maladjustment and deviant behavior, they, in general, are poorly adapted to life on their own account and copy this behavior models in future generations [9].

One should note that a great majority of psychological research focuses on quality of life in child homes, or on problems orphaned children face there while there is little information regarding children's worries and feelings. Research on subjective well-being presents a moderately informative approach to child-centered well-being assessment, and, hopefully, will contribute to real improvement of this vulnerable group' well-being.

The concept “well-being” is multifaceted and reflects different aspects of human life. E. Diener [10] indicates three factors that constitute our well-being: LS – life satisfaction; PE – positive emotions; LNE – lack of negative emotions.

N. Bradburn [11] in his works argued that psychological well-being is crucial for taking the rough with the smooth. He believes that a person can be psychologically well only in case positive emotions outweigh negative ones.

The “subjective” is what people feel and sense. Subjective well-being comprises both cognitive and emotional components. Interrelations between these two components attest that satisfaction at cognitive level is accompanied by sensing emotional well-being.

According to M. McGillivray and M. Clarke [12], subjective well-being implies multidimensional life assessment including cognitive judgments, life satisfaction and affective evaluation of moods and emotions. Subjective well-being is associated not only with positive affect. Lack of negative emotions is similarly important, for example, anger or fear can significantly decrease subjective well-being. Subjective well-being relates to how people evaluate their life. These evaluations reflect a certain balance of positive and negative emotions. Hardships (for example, traumas, stresses, deprivations, etc.) have a more prolonged and deeper impact on well-being functioning than good events [13].

It may be stated that researchers and practitioners do not always take into account the fact that besides an objectively represented unfavorable life situation there exists its subjective component – children inward stance which reflects their attitude towards the situation occurred. Provision of any sort of support – psychological intervention, pedagogical – is impossible without the insight into child's inner experiences. These experiences embrace a host of unconscious elements shaped by many environmental factors further internalized.

## 2. Method

The aim is to study peculiarities of subjective well-being shown by orphaned and non-orphaned children. The following tasks were supposed to be solved to realize this aim:

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