**PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING AS A CONDITION OF THE READINESS OF Russian UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS FOR ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE**

**Emil Velinov – Oksana Isaeva - Svetlana Savinova**

**Abstract**

The paper presents the results of the study of the psychological well-being of professors of Russian universities as conditions of their psychological readiness for organizational changes. Personal attitude to innovations directly depends on the level of psychological well-being of the professors. The paper methodology are: tool "Ready for organizational changes" (D. Holt) and Scale of psychological well-being (C.Ryff). The results of the study show a high level of awareness of teachers about the upcoming changes - the introduction of a remote mode of education stated by 92% of respondents, who acknowledged the content and essence of the changes. The willingness of university professors to support leadership in implementing organizational change and willingness to implement the proposed innovations are also linked to the characteristics of psychological well-being. The paper results show a link between the level of psychological well-being and the reediness for organizational changes of university professors. The level of psychological well-being can be a predictor of the readiness of university professors for innovations.

**Key words:** psychological well-being, readiness for organizational changes, university professors

**JEL Code:** I31, O15

**Introduction**

In recent years, the world has developed what can be described as "the largest quasi-experiment in history to dramatically transform working and employment conditions".

This experiment unfolded in all areas of human life and activity, including education. It is about humanity's entry into the digital age of life, as well as global natural and man-made upheavals, including the 19-magnitude COVID pandemic.

Changes in the organization of the educational process in universities, the introduction of new content and forms of education associated with the use of digital technologies were perceived ambiguously by the pedagogical community. The results of a survey of higher education teachers and staff, conducted by the International Association of Universities in 2019, showed that innovations related to the digitalization of higher education are universal: 87% of teachers noted the integration of digital technologies into the educational process, 79% - used digital technologies in their practice to varying degrees. At the same time, the level of readiness to work in the face of changes was significantly lower: only 39% of the instructors surveyed were willing to use online courses, blended learning formats, big data, blockchain, etc. Every fourth teacher surveyed admitted that he was not sufficiently prepared for such a future (Abramov et al., 2020). These data indicate, on the one hand, the tolerance of higher school teachers to changes, recognition of new opportunities for these changes, on the other hand, the lack of readiness for such changes, which was shown by the sudden and rapid introduction of distance learning associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.

The purpose of this article is to study psychological well-being as a subjective prerequisite for readiness for organizational change. The choice of these characteristics is due to their status in the field of personal resources of a modern person: psychological well-being is recognized as a universal criterion for the positive socialization of a person.

**1 Current state of the research problem**

The attitude to organizational changes as the development of new ideas, forms of behavior that are adequate to the nature of changes in the external environment, is studied not only in the context of resistance to changes, but also in the context of readiness for them. Studying resistance to organizational change, the authors emphasize that the nature of this phenomenon is due to psychological mechanisms and behavioural characteristics that determine the direction of change (Mkrtychyan, Isaeva, 2015).

The phenomenon of readiness is widely studied in psychology and is defined by the authors from the point of view of various approaches. From the point of view of the activity approach, “readiness” is understood as a condition or ability for successful activity (Bahrombekovna, 2020). From the standpoint of a personal approach, readiness acts as an attitude towards a certain behavior, an attitude towards active actions. In the context of an innovative approach, readiness is a condition for successful innovation, a combination of personal, psychological, group socio-psychological, organizational socio-economic factors (Brynza, 2015).

From the standpoint of a complex socio-psychological approach, "readiness for change" or psychological readiness - the category of subjective psychological reality, which, on the one hand, is a consequence or result of exploratory volitional behavior (leading to the activation of the resource, motivational, energy spheres of the psyche), on the other hand, is the cause of awareness and behavior that change the subjective and objective reality of a person (Chirkov, 2015). The relevance of this approach for our research lies in the fact that the readiness to change is directly related to the subjective psychological reality, i.e. emphasizes its dependence not on external factors, but on the resources of the individual.

Researchers of subjective well-being focus on its affective component, pointing out the positive aspects of perception. The generalized characteristic of well-being in the logic of this approach is life satisfaction as the achievement of pleasure and avoidance of displeasure, the feeling of happiness (Argyle, 2003). In the concept of Diener (1984), subjective well-being is understood as a person's satisfaction in various spheres of life.

Followers of the eudemonic approach consider well-being from the point of view of the completeness of self-realization of an individual in specific life circumstances and conditions, in a harmonious synthesis of the needs of the social environment and the development of one's own individuality.

**2 Method and Data sample**

The study involved 101 Russian university professors (12.9% men, 87.1% women from 22 till 65 years old ) from Moscow, St. Petersburg, Nizhny Novgorod, Yekaterinburg, Novosibirsk, Pskov, Surgut, Chelyabinsk, Saratov in such areas of professional activity as management, economics, psychology, pedagogy, law. Of these, 21 people (20.8%) are teachers without an academic degree, 69 people (68.3%) are teachers with the academic degree "Candidate of Science", 11 people (10.9%) are teachers with the academic degree "Doctor of Science".

To assess the psychological readiness of university professors to introduce innovations, we used the tool "Readiness for organizational changes" by D. Holt (2007) and the “Scale of psychological well-being” by C. Ryff (1995). The statistical operationalization was carried out using the SPSS 25.0 for Windows software package.

**3 Research results**

At the first stage, a study was carried out the level of reediness for organizational changes of university professors.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Table 1. Reediness for organizational changes of university professors | | | | | | |
| Reediness for organizational changes | | N | Мin | Маx | M | Ме | SD |
| The relevance of the changes | | 101 | 0,00 | 62,00 | 37,79 | 40,00 | 13,60 |
| Management support | | 101 | 0,00 | 35,00 | 24,87 | 25,00 | 5,54 |
| Feasibility of changes | | 101 | 0,00 | 35,00 | 25,31 | 26,00 | 6,10 |
| Personal Attitude | | 101 | 0,00 | 33,00 | 21,16 | 21,00 | 6,21 |

We have identified three groups (three levels) of readiness for organizational changes of university professors:

1. the first group - 18 people (17.8%) - a group of university professors with a high readiness to implement organizational changes (all values ​​of the ROC components are higher than the medians);

2. the second group - 16 people (15.8%) - a group of professors with a low readiness to implement organizational changes (all values ​​of the ROC components are lower than the medians);

3. the third group - 67 people (66.4%), a group of professors who have the values ​​of the ROC components are found both below and above the medians (the group with an average ROC).

Table 2 presents the results of psychological well-being of university professors with different levels of readiness to organizational changes.

Table 2. Results of psychological well-being of university professors with different levels of readiness to organizational changes.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Сharacteristics** | **ROC** | | | | | | | | | | | | **Total**  **N=101** | |
| **low**  16 people  (15,8%) | | **medium**  67 people (66,4%) | | | | | **high**  18 people  (17,8%) | | | | |
| M | SD | | | M | SD | | | | M | SD | | М | SD |
| Psychological well-being | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Autonomy | 28,31 | 8,44 | | 30,94 | | | 3,78 | | 32,50 | | | 4,10 | 30,80 | 4,95 |
| Competence | 29,81 | 9,01 | | 31,62 | | | 4,73 | | 33,00 | | | 5,23 | 31,58 | 5,70 |
| Personal Growth | 32,93 | 9,82 | | 36,01 | | | 4,37 | | 37,61 | | | 4,16 | 35,81 | 5,65 |
| Positive relationship | 32,31 | 10,89 | | 34,25 | | | 5,93 | | 37,44 | | | 4,30 | 34,51 | 6,82 |
| Life goals | 32,50 | 9,88 | | 35,28 | | | 4,19 | | 37,05 | | | 4,38 | 35,15 | 5,59 |
| Self-acceptance | 33,00 | 9,68 | | 34,40 | | | 4,33 | | 35,27 | | | 4,52 | 34,33 | 5,51 |
| General indicator  psychological well-being | 188,87 | 53,86 | | 202,52 | | | 18,36 | | 212,88 | | | 21,70 | 202,21 | 28,04 |

As the results of the study show, the general indicator of the psychological well-being of university professors is within the average values (M = 202.21, σ = 28.04), which indicates a rather positive functioning of professors, their subjective feeling of psychological well-being. Correlation analysis of data on ROC and characteristics of psychological well-being of university professors showed the presence of significant links between them (Table 3).

Table 3. Correlation analysis of data on ROC and characteristics of psychological well-being of university professor

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ROC | psychological well-being | | | | | | |
| Autonomy | Competence | Personal Growth | Positive relationship | Life goals | Self-acceptance | General indicator  psychological well-being |
| The relevance of the changes | -0,011 | 0,00 | 0,095 | 0,077 | 0,096 | -0,052 | 0,037 |
| Management support | 0,142 | 0,168\* | 0,230\* | 0,282\*\* | 0,254\*\* | 0,203\* | 0,292\*\* |
| Feasibility of changes | 0,042 | 0,262\*\* | 0,351\*\* | 0,189\* | 0,231\* | 0,232\*\* | 0,279\*\* |
| Personal Attitude | 0,346\*\* | 0,244\*\* | 0,128 | 0,072 | 0,168\* | 0,157 | 0,198\* |
| \*\*Correlation on level 0,01 | | | | | | | | | |
| \* Correlation on level 0,05 | | | | | | | | | |

**4 Discussion**

At the same time, the attitude of teachers to the introduced organizational changes is rather negative (38.6% of respondents indicate a negative and 41.6% - a neutral attitude towards them; only 19.8% of teachers have a positive attitude to the introduced organizational changes).

Perception of university management by teachers as committed to changes, ready to support them, and assessment of their own capabilities to implement the proposed innovations are associated with a number of characteristics of psychological well-being of employees: the presence of a goal in life, a sense of meaningfulness in their past and present, a positive attitude towards themselves and acceptance of themselves the ability to empathize and establish trusting relationships with others, understanding the need to make concessions in relationships; the competence of teachers, their ability to choose or create an appropriate context for the realization of personal needs and values;

**Conclusion**

The feasibility of changes and the support of the university leadership in the implementation of organizational changes among teachers have similar connections and structure in the context of psychological well-being. The feasibility of change and management support is determined by the severity of all components of psychological well-being, except for the component of autonomy. In other words, management support in a situation of change and ideas about the realism and feasibility of changes in their own activities and activities of the university are determined by the presence of life goals, the ability to manage their social environment, and build positive relationships with people, self-acceptance and a tendency towards personal growth. The ability to make independent judgments and actions is not tied to perceptions of the feasibility and feasibility of change and leadership support.

The relevance of the changes, the idea of ​​their timeliness and the appropriateness of inclusion in the context of a specific educational organization turned out to be unrelated to the psychological well-being of the respondents: none of the characteristics of psychological well-being correlated with this component of readiness for organizational changes. This may be due to various reasons, one of which is determined by the nature of the threats and risks of the pandemic situation.

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