

## STUDY OF PECULIARITIES OF SOCIAL NETWORK USING DEPENDING ON PERSONAL PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING

**Iuliia Tretiakova**

*Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv*

### **Abstract**

The study of psychological well-being is a really important issue of the modern society and the contemporary science. Many mental disorders and psychosomatic diseases are anteceded by mood decline, experience of ill-being. If the sense of satisfaction is absent, tensions, inconsistency in actions appear and overall functional efficiency decreases. The life style of very many people has undergone dramatic changes over the last 20 years. One of the main reasons for these changes is emergence of the Internet and its special faculty – social networks. It is well known that communications are a necessary structural component of psychological well-being. Emergence of social networks has expanded communicative opportunities to virtual infinity; at the same time, such communications swallow up personal time and efforts. This article makes an attempt to analyze peculiarities of personal behavior in social networks depending on a personal level of psychological well-being. Students of the Kyiv National University (Kyiv, Ukraine) and working youth have been examined with Ryff's Scales of Psychological Well-Being and our structured interview. The obtained results show differences in attitudes and behavioral patterns in social networks depending on a person's level of psychological well-being.

KEY WORDS: psychological well-being, patterns of behavior, social network, structured interview

### **Anotacija**

Psichologinės gerovės studijos yra svarbi šiuolaikinės visuomenės ir mokslo tema. Dauguma psichikos sutrikimų ir psichosomatinų negalavimų prasideda esant prastai nuotaikai ar negalavimo pojūčiui. Jei neįsijaučiame pasitenkinimo, kyla įtampa, atsiranda veiksmų nepastovumas, mažėja bendras funkcinis efektyvumas. Per pastaruosius 20 metų daugelio žmonių gyvenimo būdas labai pasikeitė. Viena šių pokyčių priežasčių – interneto ir jo atmainos socialinių tinklų atsiradimas. Gerai žinoma, kad bendravimas yra būtinas struktūrinis psichologinės gerovės komponentas. Socialiniai tinklai išplėtė bendravimo galimybes beveik iki begalybės, tačiau jie atima daug asmeninio laiko ir pastangų. Šiame straipsnyje analizuojami asmens elgesio socialiniuose tinkluose ypatumai, atsižvelgiant į psichologinės gerovės lygmenį. Kijevo nacionalinio universiteto studentai ir dirbantys jaunuoliai tirti pasitelkus Ryff'o psichologinės gerovės testą ir struktūruotą interviu. Rezultatai atskleidė nuostatų ir elgesio socialiniuose tinkluose skirtumus tarp skirtingo psichologinės gerovės lygmens respondentų.

PAGRINDINIAI ŽODŽIAI: psichologinė gerovė, elgesio modeliai, socialinis tinklas, struktūruotas interviu.

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## **Introduction**

Psychological well-being is a rather subjective concept, but at the same time reflects the coordinated work of mental processes and functions, as well as a sense of integrity and inner balance. Each person aspires at his/her life activities to achieve psychological well-being and uses all available internal and external resources for this purpose.

The modern psychological science proposes several approaches to understanding of the “psychological well-being” concept. But all approaches characterize this concept as a state that is characteristic of a healthy person.

The “well-being” concept can be understood in the broadest sense as a multi-factorial construct representing complex relationships of cultural, social, psychological, physical, economic and spiritual factors (Ryff, Keyes, 1995).

A fundamental transformation is taking place in the field of information exchange and communication during the past twenty years, after Internet appearance, which certainly affect the ways of psychological well-being achievement. The Internet affects virtually all spheres of human activities (cultural, social, psychological, economic, spiritual, etc.) that are components of psychological well-being.

In practice, Internet users, who are the majority of population in developed societies and a growing number of people of the third world, live actually in the Internet. As a lot of evidence shows, the Internet with all its variety of applications, is a communicative media in our life that embrace work, personal relationships and social interactions in social networks, information, entertainment, social services, politics and religion. We cannot even single out any one sphere of this continuous Internet using and compare them over time of use, because of Internet activities are very specific and includes random “surfing” of websites not related to work or sending of personal e-mails due to the widespread advancement of new informational multitasking environment (Castells, 2009).

Social groups and individuals around the world use the new possibilities of communicative networking to improve their projects, to protect their own interests and to affirm personal values.

Social networks are the most attractive part of the Internet that have turned over ideas on interpersonal interactions and communications existed not so long ago, have made close that was far and accessible that was inaccessible.

The Facebook social network is at the forefront. According to regularly published statistical reports, this social network has more than 1.65 billion monthly

active users in the world. 1.09 billion people visit Facebook every day, that is 16 % – increasing compared to the previous year. 76 % of Facebook users are women and 66 % are men. The largest audience (29.7 %) are people aged 25 to 34 years. Average time spent for one-time visit is 20 minutes. 50 % of 18–24-year old Facebook users get in it as soon as they wake up (Facebook Reports First Quarter, 2016).

In addition, some social network users indicate that they experience something resembling withdrawal symptoms if they do not have an opportunity to browse the social network in a usual mode.

Of course, the psychological science is faced a new phenomenon and experience an urgent necessity to get answers that will shed light on understanding of the new social process, in particular, on the nature of social network using depending on a personal level of psychological well-being.

The aim of this article is to reveal and describe the features of social network using, which depend on a personal level of psychological well-being.

The object is person's psychological well-being.

We assume that the higher level of psychological well-being is the less a person is in need of virtual communications and self-expression; of course, we do not deny the importance of virtual communicative ways that open up new virtually limitless possibilities, but we regard them as an additional source, and not the main one.

## **1. Research procedure**

96 people participated in a research, including 56 students from the Faculty of Psychology of Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv (40 girls and 16 boys from 19 to 27 years) and 40 working respondents with full higher education having different professions (20 women, 20 men, 27 – 39 year old).

At the first stage of the research, the respondents were asked to answer Ryff's Scales of Psychological Well-Being. Then, the respondents were interviewed with the structured interview determining behavioural patterns in social networks. The interview questions were divided into blocks corresponding to the structure of Ryff's Scales of Psychological Well-Being (Ryff, Keyes, 1995). Data as for the structure and nature of the questions are presented in Table 1. Also the interview included a block with general demographic questions.

Table 1. Characteristics of psychological technique used in the research

The Ryff Scales of Psychological Well-Being	Structured interview
Positive Relations With Others	
High scorer: has warm, satisfying, trusting relationships with others; is concerned about the welfare of others; capable of strong empathy, affection, and intimacy; understands give and take of human relationships. Low scorer: has few close, trusting relationships with others; finds it difficult to be warm, open, and concerned about others; is isolated and frustrated in interpersonal relationships; not willing to make compromises to sustain important ties with others	A total number of friends in the social network, as well as a number of those friends with whom a user has trusting relationships within the social network and keeps communication are determined
Autonomy	
High scorer: is self-determining and independent, able to resist social pressures to think and act in certain ways, regulates behavior from within, evaluates self by personal standards. Low scorer: is concerned about the expectations and evaluations of others, relies on judgments of others to make important decisions, conforms to social pressures to think and act in certain ways.	Importance of social approval in the form of likes, comments, spreads is studied and how it affects person's mood and decision-making. How painful is criticism perceived, as well as what actions can be taken in response to criticism or condemnation?
Environmental Mastery	
High scorer: has a sense of mastery and competence in managing the environment, controls complex array of external activities, makes effective use of surrounding opportunities, able to choose or create contexts suitable to personal needs and values. Low scorer, has difficulty managing everyday affairs, feels unable to change or improve surrounding context, is unaware of surrounding opportunities, lacks sense of control over external world	How much are social networks used and how much do they help personal goal achievement
Personal Growth	
High scorer: has a feeling of continued development, sees self as growing and expanding, is open to new experiences, has sense of realizing his or her potential, sees improvement in self and behavior over time, is changing in ways that reflect more self-knowledge and effectiveness. Low scorer: has a sense of personal stagnation, lacks sense of improvement or expansion over time, feels bored and uninterested with life, feels unable to develop new attitudes or behaviors	Social network use for world understanding and personal development

Purpose in Life	
High scorer: has goals in life and a sense of directedness, feels there is meaning to present and past life, holds beliefs that give life purpose, has aims and objectives for living. Low scorer: lacks a sense of meaning in life; has few goals or aims, lacks sense of direction; does not see purpose in past life; has no outlooks or beliefs that give life meaning	Social network help in new goal formation is clarified
Self-Acceptance	
High scorer: possesses a positive attitude toward the self; acknowledges and accepts multiple aspects of self, including good and bad qualities; feels positive about past life. Low scorer: feels dissatisfied with self, is disappointed with what has occurred in past life, is troubled about certain personal qualities, wishes to be different than what he or she is	Subjective views on social network impact on self-esteem and self-acceptance is estimated

*Source:* composed according to Carol D. Ryff and Corey Lee M. Keyes (1995)

At the second stage of the research, the respondents were divided into two groups according to the criterion of psychological well-being. The first group – having a high level of psychological well-being – included 27 people (who scored more than 394 points, according to the Lepeshinskiy’s standardization procedure for the Russian-speaking population) (Лепешинский, 2007). The second group – having a low level of psychological well-being – included 30 people (who scored less than 334 points).

## 2. Results

Before analyzing of differences of social network use by the respondents with different levels of psychological well-being, we want to pay attention to the indicators obtained with the structural components of the Scales of Psychological Well-Being. Table 2 shows general indicators for the entire sample (96 people) and separately for the group of students and the group of workers. We have not put forward a task to determine work influence on psychological well-being, but statistically significant differences were observed between the groups in the course of mathematical analysis. Non-working student have psychological well-being lower than those of working people with full higher education, especially, it is true for such structural elements as positive relations with others and self-acceptance, autonomy and environmental mastery. Apparently, existence of satisfactory work and life experience that gives confidence (the group of working people consisted of people of older age than students) influence positively on psychological well-being.

Table 2. Indicators for Ryff's Scales of Psychological Well-Being

Structure of Ryff's Scales of Psychological Well-Being	General indicators ( <i>N</i> = 96)	Indicator for the student group ( <i>N</i> = 56)	Indicator for the group of working people ( <i>N</i> = 40)	Statist. Signif.
Psychological Well-Being	369	347	391	*
Positive Relations With Others	64	58	70	*
Autonomy	61	55.6	65.7	*
Environmental Mastery	56	50.2	63	*
Personal Growth	70	71.2	68.7	–
Purpose in Life	60	59.2	58.5	–
Self-Acceptance	58	52.8	65	*

Note \* – are statistically significant at the .05 level.

Also, the psychological well-being level never was less than 302 points for the respondents; that points represent the upper limit of low levels of psychological well-being according to the scale standards for the Russian version (Лепешинский, 2007).

We noticed during the standardized interview that in response to questions about ways of social networking use, the respondent gave socially desirable answers. For this reason, we decided to find out whether the respondent estimate adequately time they spend in social networks. To this end, we asked 15 students to watch for their friends (with whom they live together) during two days and to record the amount of time spent in social networks. It was found that the respondents did not adequately assess their time spent in social networks in 45 % of cases. On average, the difference between self-estimation and the time obtained from monitoring is from 40 minutes to 2 hours.

Thus, social networks captivate their users so that they become unable to adequately assess time periods in some cases. Of course, it does not exclude the influence of social desirability in estimating of time spent in social networks. In any case, these conclusions are assumptions by their nature and should be studied more deeply.

Given the complexity of decoding and mathematical processing of the interview responses, we used in our analysis not only quantitative methods (correlation analysis, Student's T test, descriptive statistics), but also a qualitative analysis. This allowed us to describe in more detail different patterns of behaviour in social networks depending on person's psychological well-being.

*Positive Relations with Others.* The study results show that the groups with a high psychological well-being level and a low number of friends in social net-

works and in real life are not significantly different from each other. The data variability is large enough: from 21 to 1,300 friends in social networks, and from 1 to 5 friends in real life.

*Autonomy.* The analysis show that the higher person's autonomy level is the more often the user uses a social network for specific purposes, mainly for sending-receiving messages ( $r = 0,389, p = 0.015$ ) and it happens often in a good mood or with interest ( $r = -0,456, p = 0.001$ ). Accordingly, the lower person's autonomy level is the more often the user uses a social network to be distracted or to kill time. Social network visiting happens more often in a negative mood. Also, the lower person's autonomy level is the more friends the respondent has in a social network ( $r = -0,444, p = 0.024$ ).

*Environmental Mastery.* The respondents with a high Environmental Mastery level often are connected to a social network in a positive emotional state ( $r = -0,490, p = 0.008$ ). Persons who experience difficulties in organization of daily living activities get in a social network being in a negative emotional state.

*Personal Growth.* 87 % of all studied respondents from the two groups answered that social networks could be used for personal growth and for expanding of personal outlook and knowledge on the world through news from others. Unexpectedly, we have determined correlation between the characteristics of information browsed typically by social network users and personal growth. The respondents with a high level of personal growth prefer to browse news from their friends, and the respondents with low indicators prefer reading information relating to their hobbies ( $r = -0,501, p = 0.004$ ).

*Purpose in Life.* Users having well defined individual life goals prefer viewing information about their hobbies and educational articles ( $r = -0.379, p = 0.046$ ).

*Self-Acceptance.* 53 % of the respondents with a high psychological well-being level notes that they often embellish in social networks events of their own lives in order to attract attention to them. That's why they should not compare themselves with someone else. Such responses in the group with low psychological well-being were given only by 12 % of the respondents. 69 % of the respondents with low psychological well-being note that they experience after news viewing discomfort of knowing that their own lives are not as bright as that of others. Certainly, such discomfort can adversely affect their self-acceptance. Also, the respondents with a high level of self-acceptance spend less time in social networks ( $r = -0,521, p = 0.032$ ).

The above results confirm our assumption about the fact that the higher level of psychological well-being, the less a person is needed in virtual communication and self-expression through social networks.

## Conclusions

The results of empirical research revealed different patterns of individual behaviour in social networks that depend on psychological well-being.

People with a high level of psychological well-being use social networks to achieve specific goals (mainly sending and receiving messages for specific information required). Also, they visit social networks in a positive mood or with interest to something specific, and spend less time online.

People with a low level of psychological well-being often use social networks out of boredom or for distraction (instead of resolving of specific life problems). They frequently visit social networks in a negative mood. Social support in the form of likes and positive comments is important for them. They feel lonely if interest to their personality form a part of social network users or important friends is reduced. In response, they try to attract attention by posting new photos and posts and spend more personal time for this.

We see a vicious circle in these circumstances. In our opinion, social networking cannot be regarded exclusively as a positive or a negative phenomenon. Its role is defined by people themselves. Excessive passion in it replaces reality and, as the study results show, does not improve personal psychological well-being. However, if a person uses social networking as an additional tool to achieve specific life goals and objectives, it can even contribute to personal psychological well-being.

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