

DOI: 10.12731/2218-7405-2018-7-20-35  
UDC 159.9

SEMANTIC INDICATORS  
OF STUDENTS' SELF-REALIZATION  
AS SUBJECTIVE MARKERS OF THEIR  
PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING  
IN UNIVERSITY TRAINING

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*The article describes subjectively significant circumstances of students' self-realization, ensuring the necessary level of their psychological well-being in the learning process. It was the students' opinions about possibilities of their self-realization in university education that were studied.*

*Based on the method of thesaurus analysis of students' stories, the authors disclose semantic indicators of their self-realization within the framework of three key thesauri: thesaurus of the readiness to self-realization; thesaurus of the self-realization measures and actions; thesaurus of self-realization activators.*

*In accordance with the received data, the following three dominant themes of students' self-realization and their psychological well-being were determined, as follows: the personal involvement into the education process; revealing the hidden capabilities during the education process; the social integration into the university community.*

*The results of the research can be applied to carry out targeted monitoring of students' psychological well-being in the higher school education sphere.*

**Keywords:** *higher school; students' psychological well-being; self-realization in education; semantic indicators; thesaurus analysis; subjective dominants of psychological well-being in education.*

## СЕМАНТИЧЕСКИЕ ИНДИКАТОРЫ САМОРЕАЛИЗАЦИИ СТУДЕНТОВ КАК СУБЪЕКТИВНЫЕ МАРКЕРЫ ИХ ПСИХОЛОГИЧЕСКОГО БЛАГОПОЛУЧИЯ В ВУЗОВСКОМ ОБУЧЕНИИ

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*В статье описываются субъективно значимые обстоятельства самореализации студентов, обеспечивающие необходимый уровень их психологического благополучия в процессе обучения. Изучены мнения студентов о возможностях их самореализации в университетской среде.*

*На основе метода тезаурусного анализа высказываний студентов авторы раскрывают семантические индикаторы их самореализации в рамках трех ключевых тезаурусов: тезауруса готовности к самореализации, тезауруса мер и действий для самореализации, тезауруса активаторов самореализации. В соответствии с полученными данными были определены следующие три доминантные темы самореализации студентов и их психологического благополучия: личностная включенность в процесс обучения; раскрытие внутренних способностей в процессе обучения; социальная интеграция в университетское сообщество. Результаты исследования могут быть применены для проведения адресных мониторингов психологического благополучия студентов в образовательной сфере высшей школы.*

**Ключевые слова:** *высшая школа; психологическое благополучие студентов; самореализация в образовании; семантические индикаторы; тезаурусный анализ; субъективные доминанты психологического благополучия в образовании.*

### **Introduction**

The development of a viable young generation is largely determined by the activation of personal patterns and mechanisms of psychologi-

cal health of student youth related to the realization of internal potential [5]. It is known that psychological well-being of a person is inextricably linked with self-realization, especially in youth [9]. In fact, both these phenomena reflect the same process of full and productive existence of the individual in certain socio-cultural conditions [1].

The meaning of self-realization for a young person is the capacity to be a true subject of one's own life, be creative, active, take responsibility, make decisions, pursue goal-setting, etc. [8]. In this regard, the content, process and technology of university training should be focused on stimulating student self-realization in the logic of maintaining their psychological well-being, psycho-emotional stability, and overcoming crisis and destabilizing factors.

In the humanities, the issue of self-realization as a factor of person psychological health has been studied in the framework of several leading scientific traditions: phenomenological tradition (E. Husserl, M. Heidegger, A. Schütz, R.D. Lang, M. Merleau-Ponty, etc.); existential tradition (L. Binswanger, C. Cofer, M. Appley, R. May, J. Bugental, K. Jaspers, M. Buber, V. Frankl, A. Längle, etc.); hermeneutical tradition (F. Schleiermacher, H.-G. Gadamer, V. Dilthey, E. Betty, P. Ricker et al.); personological approach (E. Spranger, V. Shtern, H.A. Murray, S. Maddi, H. Marcuse, E. Mounier, P. Teilhard de Chardin et al.); interactionist approach (Ch. Cooley, G.H. Mead, W.I. Thomas, H. Becker, H. Blumer, J.M. Charon, E. Goffman, J.P. Hewitt etc.); constructivist approach (J. Piaget, G. Kelly, J. Bruner, E. Glasersfeld, T. Luckmann, P.L. Berger, G. Bateson, P. Watzlawick, etc.).

The growth of research in the sphere of self-realization was largely promoted by the ideas of M. Weber's understanding sociology, humanistic psychology (E. Fromm, G.W. Allport, K. Goldstein, A. Angyal, A. Maslow, G. Murphy, C. Rogers etc.); the theory of autopoiesis (H.R. Maturana, F. Varela), the ecological theory of human development by U. Bronfenbrenner, the field theory and concept of the life space by K. Lewin, etc.

In each of these traditions and approaches, self-realization is viewed as the most important ontological condition and attribute of a fully functioning personality.

We carried out this research on the basis of the general provision that self-realization is the result of productive socialization [15], which is started by the internal ontological aspiration for *self-realization* [7]. Being the leading life motivator in the university years, the desire for *self-realization* psychologically inspires and mobilizes the young person, activates his abilities and internal resources in order to express himself, to receive a valuable life experience, to prove himself in learning, science, society, business, culture and so on [13]. When we are dealing with the process and the phenomenon of self-realization of students in university education, it is necessary to clearly understand that this gives us the most reliable indicator of their successful personal and professional development, and at the same time acts as a humanitarian criterion for the productivity and effectiveness of the educational process in the university in general [14]. In planning our research, we proceeded from the fact that the process of students' self-realization is caused by such a construction of educational practice in the university that ensures the full socio-cultural development of students as capable and competent personalities [3].

In the course of researching the psychological appearance of student youth in Russian universities we considered self-realization as the process of the of building up a unique experience of responsible and full life of *the personality* [10; 11; 12], and a process of self-development and realization of the personal capabilities and meaningful attitude towards the world and themselves under present life circumstances [4].

## **Materials and methods**

### ***The object and hypothesis of the research***

The object of our study was the higher school information-educational environment as the student youth's self-realization sphere. The main problem of the research consisted in identifying students' notions about their self-realization possibilities and circumstances at the university and detecting the leading educational resources that stimulate these circumstances.

Our study relies on a hypothesis that the process of students' self-realization under the conditions of university training (apart from learning

abilities and favorable learning conditions) depends on the arrangement of cognitive-communicative environment of learning. Besides, this environment should help students design their professional and life way as well as provide them with all the necessary technologies and resources for self-development. Obviously, successful self-realization of students largely depends now on the existence of sustainable and adequate technology “corridor of possibilities”, which is in line with basic cultural norms and values transmitted in educational process [10].

### ***Scientific approach***

The possibility to elaborate this hypothesis is provided by applying sociocultural approach to studying the issue of students’ self-realization in higher school, which implies using educational technologies as ways to reveal and realize the essential forces of students who absorb particular historical forms of sociocultural relationships [11]. Being a synthesis of knowledge, skills, aptitudes, talents, etc., as being driven by interests, strivings, expectations and meanings, these essential forces are formed when an individual acquires the experience of culture through the mechanisms of desubjectivation and objectivation of this experience in social practice [12].

### ***The goal and stages of research***

In our opinion, a current task of studying the phenomenon of psychological health and well-being of young people is to connect the potentials of applying modern education approaches and technologies with the process of students’ self-realization in university training. Therefore, the main goal of the research is to define the subjectively expressed indicators of students’ self-realization, which reflect various forms and modalities of their psychological health and well-being.

To achieve the set goal, we carried out a research consisting of two stages.

*The first stage* was aimed at determining subjectively important conditions for students’ self-realization in the domain of university life.

*The second stage* involved generalizing of the obtained data about the signs and forms of manifestation of students’ self-realization and

defining subjective dominants of students' psychological well-being in the learning process.

### ***Participants of the research***

It was through conducting a tentative survey, as well as selective interviewing and focus-groups method that the most subjective-significant conditions of students' self-realization in the modern university were found.

The research was conducted in 2016–2017 academic year, the participants being 502 students from four different Belgorod universities located in the city of Belgorod: the Technological University, the Humanities University, the Economic University, the MIA Higher School of Law.

### ***Method of thesaurus analysis***

In the course of the questioning and interviewing students' different opinions, estimations and answers to the following questions were ascertained: «What does the self-realization in the studies and university life mean to you?», «Is it possible to achieve the self-realization in the course of the studying?», «What does students' self-realization depend on?», «What promotes and what prevents your self-realization at the university?», «What is the role of the university in achieving students' self-realization?», «What is required from yourselves for the self-realization at the university?», etc.

The obtained answers and opinions undergo the primary content analysis. Units with the significant content were separated from the received information array, generalized, systematized and grouped into certain thematic communities consisting of inferences being common in terms of focus, context and meaning, which are similar in their narrative and subject line. In this regard, we aimed to omit inessential formal, logical, stylistic, discursive, lexical, grammatical and other differences and nuances. At a first approximation from the students' answers, nine semantic categories reflecting different aspects and self-realization possibilities in education were separated out. Both more advanced semantic processing and thesaurus analysis [6] of the obtained answers categories

included their clusterization based on more versatile coupling of related lexical and thematic-expressive constructions. This allowed us to enlarge and consolidate different answer categories into three overall semantic clusters, which served as a basis for the formulation of three significant conditions of students' self-realization, respectively.

## Results and discussion

Semantic indicators of self-realization conditions in education

*In the first group* of answers included connotations, estimations and statements reflecting respondents' immediate attitudes to the educational activity and training process at the university as well as the importance of this activity in their life. Students' estimations, which were included in this group mainly raised the subject of subjective significance of the education process and education high motivation on the whole. In Table 1, the most widespread semantic indicators of students' statements that were included in the first *thesaurus cluster* of their notions about subjective conditions in terms of the readiness to self-realization in education are outlined in percentage terms (at the rate of 100% mentions per every indicator). The list of indicators is shown in the order of rating.

Table 1.

### Semantic indicators of the thesaurus of readiness for self-realization in education

No	Semantic indicators	The frequency of usage (%)
1	Interest in education presence	69
2	Willingness to study at the chosen university	65
3	Satisfaction with education	64
4	Personal significance and value of education	57
5	Absorption in studying and preparation in general	54
6	Willingness to take after teachers	47
7	Tendency to enhance mastering the future profession deeper	42
8	Continuous involvement into the education process	38
9	Other	33

The above-mentioned semantic connotations prevalence indicated the significance of student's personality implication and involvement in

the educational process. We interpreted the opinions spectrum reflecting this circumstance of students' self-realization as *ego involvement* in education process.

*The second group* of estimations is formed through the selection of students' statements and estimations, in which the degree and completeness of their *personality* revealing in the course of the university preparation (inclinations, individual features, properties, abilities, experience, talents etc.) were reflected.

In Table 2, appropriate semantic indicators showing the importance of students' inner resources revealing as their self-realization initial basis are reflected. These indicators were singled out into the independent cluster in students' estimations general array.

Table 2.

Semantic indicators of thesaurus of the self-realization measures and actions		
No	Semantic indicators	The frequency of usage (%)
1	Students' inner potential activation, their abilities and talents development	73
2	Intensive self-knowledge and perfection in the course of studying at the university	68
3	Increase of subjective-significant utility of the academic training	63
4	The possibility of achieving goals and making their dreams come true through training at the university	60
5	Performing the duty of a social lift by the university	57
6	Stimulation of successes in studying, strengths activation in the course of training	55
7	Versatile self-manifestation and self-expression at the university	52
8	Support of personal efforts in the studying	47
9	Other	35

As the table shows, reflecting certain acmeological sense ideas of self-realization concerning self-perfection possibilities, the personal and professional growth high parameters achievement dominated in the sense field of students' estimations. In general, the noted indicators determined the importance of conditions for students' *abilities realization* in the course of the university preparation ensuring.



The *third group* structure included estimations and opinions that indicate the importance of constant contacts and *social integration* in the course of the university education. In students' opinion, it is impossible to realize oneself as the personality without intensive, friendly communication and joint activity.

The importance of a certain social atmosphere as an environment for the versatile self-knowledge and self-expression presence is noted in answers. The sphere of constant communication, collective life, social acceptance and determination, collaboration and mutual help plays a significant role.

Table 3 shows semantic indicators of students' answers reflecting different modalities of the social support and facilitation significance for the full self-realization at the university. These indicators composed the last thesaurus cluster of students' opinions about self-realization possibilities at the university.

Table 3.

Semantic indicators of thesaurus of self-realization activators		
No	Semantic indicators	The frequency of usage (%)
1	Presence of the intensive transpersonal interaction in the university life	74
2	Manifestation of mutual assistance and support in the student environment	70
3	Presence of the social proximity and solidarity in the student environment	67
4	Manifestation of concern and care from the university side	62
5	University's help in the students' problems resolving	59
6	Presence of the atmosphere of confidence and respect	56
7	Intensity and strength of friendly connections	55
8	Real functioning of student collectives in the university life	44
9	Ensuring students' leisure and mode of life qualitative	42
10	Other	34

In general, in our view, the revealed students' subjectively significant notions about self-realization allow to single out particular problems of the university training. Firstly, it is building-up and development of stu-

dents' universal abilities; secondly, it is the productive activity, purposeful and sensible actions in the educational sphere stimulation; thirdly, it is ensuring a wide social context of this activity's realization as both a social filter and this activity's trigger.

### **The subjective dominants of students' psychological well-being in education**

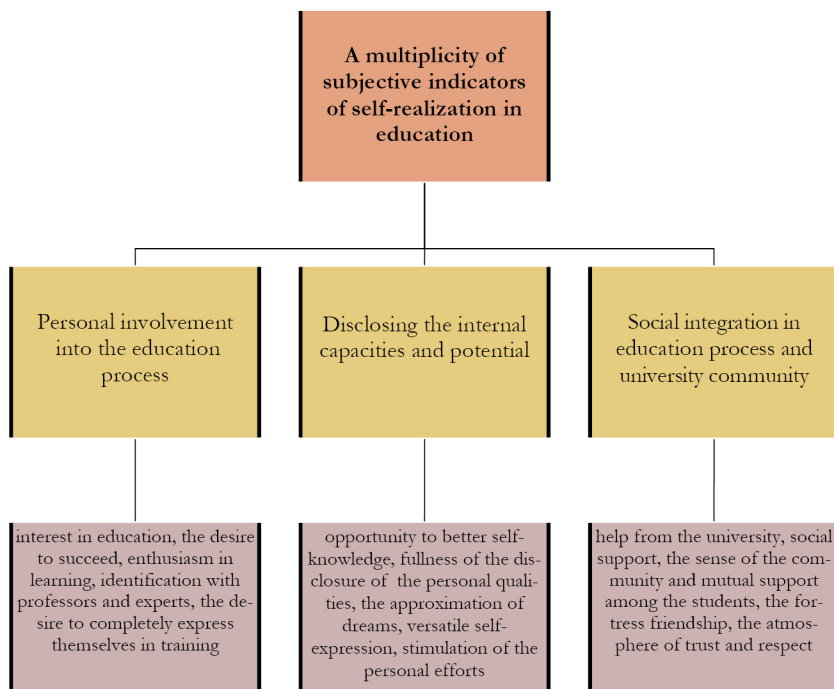
As a result of the psychological and pedagogical analysis of the presented semantic clusters, we have identified the following three main areas of ensuring students' self-realization and psychological well-being:

- personal involvement into the education process;
- disclosing the internal capacities into the education process;
- social integration into the university community.

Figure 1 schematically reflects the content of the trends of psychological well-being, which was obtained on the basis of the analysis of the opinions of the students who participated in research and innovation activities.

*The first trend* – the personal involvement in the process of university education – means a certain attitude toward learning and working at the university as a leading occupation in the current period of life. This trend is manifested as the students' interest and satisfaction with the training process in the university; as a conviction in the value of the specialty; as a willingness to master the profession and achieve success in their work, as well as a high psychological interest in research and innovation. The high personal involvement of students into the training process and in scientific working are also related to their readiness to take after teachers and representatives of the chosen profession, being eager to comprehend the profession and holistically express and manifest themselves in the academic, scientific and extracurricular fields of activity [12].

The activity aspect of students' self-realization, the degree of the intensity of their work, the interest in training, level of immersion in general, the level of significance, the subjective value of educational, scientific and innovation activities are reflected in the content of the first trend.



**Fig.1.** The dominant trends of students' psychological well-being university training

*The second trend* – disclosing the internal capacities into the education process – means development of personal potential of students, their opportunities for self-expression and self-knowledge in the study activities, the realization of the abilities and talents. For complete students' self-realization, first of all, it is necessary to fully disclose their internal qualities and resources, their understanding of themselves as successful and effective subjects, presence of incentives for their efforts in learning and scientific innovation work, their understanding the obvious usefulness of the training in the university and the opportunities of better self-knowledge and self-expression as productive people [14].

This trend reflects the personal aspect of the students' self-realization and presents a central trend their professional, scientific-research and

motivational development, since its content reflects the plan of internal moments of self-development in the profession.

*The third trend* of the students' self-realization – the social integration into the university community – means the existence of care and attention to the student; availability of assistance from the university in solving not only educational, scientific, labor problems, but also personal ones; a sense of community and acceptance in the corporate environment, the presence of an atmosphere of trust, mutual revenue and support, the existence of strong friendships, respect, etc. [12].

The social aspect of students' self-realization is reflected in the content of this trend. This aspect points to the importance of developing broad social ties and interactions of students not only in the training process, research and study activities, but also in social, creativity and cultural ones in general. For achievement of self-realization, the young person needs to be integrated into the largest possible number of the social groups and communities of different levels and orientations [2].

In general, if universities adopt the above-mentioned trends as working conditions, this will allow to significantly increase the motivational resource and attractiveness of the study-practical activity among students and raise the level of their psychological well-being and health.

## **Conclusion**

The presented research was carried out on the basis of thesaurus analysis method, aimed at revealing the sense constructs of students' self-realization and well-being in the learning process. The essence of the method is the semantic clustering of answers based on a more universal combination of related lexical and thematically expressive constructions. The semantic indicators of self-realization obtained during the application of this method were grouped into three thesaurus modalities – the cluster of readiness for self-realization, cluster of measures and actions for self-realization, cluster of activators of self-realization in university training.

The research results allow us to conclude that there are following subjective-significant conditions of students' self-realization and psy-

chological well-being in the university education. Firstly, it is ego involvement in education, which appears in students' interest to education presence, willingness to study at the chosen university, satisfaction with education, involvement in the education process, sturdy self-identification with teachers and masters of the profession, tendency to holistic self-development in education. Secondly, it is the realization of abilities in education, which means students' personality potential development, their better self-knowledge in education possibility, the approach to their dreams implementation, abilities and talents revealing, focus on the future success and professional growth, on their versatile self-manifestation in education, their efforts in studying facilitation, etc. Thirdly, it is students' social integration that appears in the form of community and mutual assistance friendly connections atmosphere of confidence and respect.

### **Acknowledgements**

*The reported study was funded by RFBR according to the research project No 18-013-01151.*

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