

POSITIVE EXPERIENCING OF LONELINESS AS A FACTOR OF PERSONALITY SOCIALIZATION IN THE SOCIETY

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Abstract

The article focuses on the theoretical analysis of such a phenomenon as loneliness and the forms of experiencing it. The article provides an empirical research of loneliness, isolation, separation and personality's emotional intellect as determinants of possible positive experience of loneliness. No association is established between evaluation of notions of the semantic field of loneliness and the degree of emotional intellect maturity.

***Key words:** loneliness, seclusion, isolation, positive loneliness experience, emotional intellect, personal reflection, youth, adult age, determinant, perspective.*

Introduction

Loneliness is a complicated and contradictory phenomenon of personality's existence. On the one hand, this phenomenon is associated with deformation of various relations in which an individual is involved and, in such an event, it is accompanied by realization or feeling of the hostility of the world and own disability to find a more or less stable position in it. In other words, loneliness is a hindrance to successful integration of an individual into a wider context of social relations, and a lacking feeling of community results in insufficient development of meaningful relations with the world. Besides, loneliness has a negative effect on the development of an individual's motivational sphere (needs, aspirations, feelings) and, generally, impedes appropriate development of psyche and personality. However, in the perspective of some theoretical approaches, particularly, the existential and humanistic ones, loneliness is perceived as a phenomenon allowing plunging into personal reflection, into contemplation about key issues of senses; loneliness embraces an opportunity of personality's deep spiritual development.

Currently, the field of scientific research demonstrates a sufficient variety of notions of loneliness, as well as theoretical conceptions and philosophical approaches focused on the

phenomenology of loneliness. However, it is apparent that there is a lack of a uniform and consistent notion of this phenomenon, of determinants of its positive experience and its link to personal factors, and that knowledge of age-specific regularities of loneliness experience is inappropriately developed, the same observation being true in respect of demarcation of the notions of “isolation” and “separation” which are adjacent to each other, and integration of these notions into the structure of the phenomenology of loneliness. Therefore, the range of issues to be focused on for exploring the phenomenon of loneliness may be outlined by the following *areas*: study of loneliness as a social and psychological phenomenon (Абульханова-Славская, 1991; Старовойтова, 1995; Тихонов, 1996; Пузанова, 2009) study of cultural and historical forms of loneliness (Покровский, 2008; Ветров, 1996; Хамитов, 1995; Швалб, Данчева, 1991); psychological peculiarities of loneliness at the age of adolescence and juvenile age (Кон, 1986; Перешина, 1999; Шагивалеева, 2007; description of phenomena close to loneliness: isolation, separation (Лебедев, 2000; Хараш, 2000).

At the same time it should be mentioned that published scientific research papers insufficiently explored the issue of *positive experience of loneliness*. The positive sense of loneliness is that it can activate a person’s creative potential (Мустакас, 1989) and facilitate personality’s self-cognition, the feeling of uniqueness and singularity of own “Его” (Бердяев, 1994) and establishment of ethical self-consciousness (Ильин, 2001). Recognizing the possibility of positive, development-facilitating implication of loneliness opens new prospects for exploration and comprehension of this phenomenon, as well as for practical application of knowledge through development of a system of means aimed at prevention and correction of negative consequences ensuing from loneliness experience.

The relevance of this issue is obvious considering insufficient focus on this matter by various psychological studies, and also given that if it is possible to define the nature of loneliness as a subjective experience, it will also be possible to develop programs and methodologies of psychological work aimed at preventing the destructive and ruinous effects that loneliness might have on personality; and to develop guidance on activation of the positive potential of loneliness, especially for persons at the age of adolescence, based on the age-specific features and the tasks of development faced by an individual at this age.

Currently, two trends in studies of loneliness can be marked out: 1) interpretation of loneliness as a mental phenomenon or a subjective experience (taking into account its possible positive forms); 2) regarding loneliness as a negative state and experience. Considering loneliness to be a subjective phenomenon and acknowledgment that it has positive forms may seem a heuristic approach, since it introduces loneliness into the system of notions modeling the process of human personality development. This study is underlain particularly by the issues of subjective positive experience of loneliness.

The object of this study is the phenomenology of positive experience of loneliness as a factor of personality socialization in the society.

The subject under study is an individual’s emotional intellect as a determinant of possible positive experience of loneliness.

The goal of empirical research is to explore the specifics of experiencing loneliness as a subjective phenomenon and to explore the determinant bringing out positive aspects of this experience.

It can be *assumed* that the possibility of positive, or resource-bearing, experience of loneliness depends on the degree of maturity of emotional intellect, with its components being the ability to understand own emotions and emotions of other people (recognition, identification, verbal expression) and to control emotions (intensity control, external expression control).

Methodology and methods of the research: domestic and foreign philosophical theories and psychological concept, which highlight the problem of loneliness. Of significant

importance for the research of the conceptual plan are: philosophical and psychological concept, revealing the issues associated with the loneliness of a person, including issues associated with the resource experience of loneliness, the activation of the creative powers of the human experience of the uniqueness and originality of the “Self” (Вейс, 1989; Moustakas, 1975; Миускович, 1989; Бердяев, 1994; Кон, 1989; Неумоева, 2005; Швалб, 1991); theoretical views, describing the concepts of “isolation” and “separation” related with loneliness (Ковалев, 1983; Лебедев, 2000; Хараш, 2004); modern psychological theories of emotional intelligence of the person (Люсин, 2009; Андреева, 2006). The important work in theoretical terms is the work by Винникотт (2002), which demonstrates the problems to stay in a state of solitude in connection with the emotional maturity of personality, as well as the modern theory of emotional intelligence (Люсин, 2009), which is the basis of the questionnaire “EmIn”, used in the present research.

For realization of tasks and verification of assumptions complex methods of research, adequate to the subject were used: methods of theoretical level (the analysis of the literature on the problem of research, theoretical modelling); for the research of subjective valuation of positions researched and for building a semantic space of the concepts of loneliness, isolation and separation for two groups the method of semantic differential was used; to determine the level of severity of emotional maturity – questionnaire “EmIn” by Люсин (2009). Statistical processing of the results was carried out by methods of primary descriptive statistics, parametric methods of comparison of the two samples and correlation analysis.

Assurance of reliability of data

The reliability and validity of the research results provided the theoretical justification of assumptions, the use of a complex of empirical research methods, quantitative and qualitative analysis of the received results, the application of methods of mathematical statistics.

Participants of the research: 60 persons: among which 30 persons are the youth (the university students 17-18 years old) and 30 persons are the adults (between 40 and 60 years old). Distribution of sample by age was driven by scientific interest and is based on a number of assumptions made by loneliness psychology researches.

Results of the research

Loneliness is regarded as a cross-disciplinary phenomenon having an existential, social, personal and complex nature. Changing views on loneliness can be seen not only within the framework of different cultures and epochs but also within the framework of different theoretical approaches in the system of psychological science as such. In the Western European philosophical thought, loneliness acquired the status of a meaningful category at the verge of the XIX-XX centuries giving rise to numerous schools of philosophy, theoretical sociology and artistic culture conveying the feeling of alienation and loneliness. Analysis of major eastern religious and philosophical concepts and doctrines (Brahmanism, Buddhism, Zen Buddhism, Confucianism, etc.) leads to the conclusion that within their framework loneliness is regarded as the instrument of apprehending the truth and achieving unity with nature, God, Absolute, the way to embark on the path to the truth via self-cognition and self-improvement, rather than a phenomenon requiring philosophical comprehension.

An upsurge of interest towards the phenomenon of loneliness among psychologists is dated 1930s – middle 1980s. At that time conceptual fundamentals of phenomenological research were laid. Among the psychological approaches to understanding loneliness offered by foreign authors the most popular were the psychodynamic approach (Фрейд, 1989; Zilboorg, 1938; Sullivan, 1953; Фромм, 1996; Fromm-Reichmann, 1989); the interactionist approach (Weiss, 1973); the “privacy” approach (Derlega, Margulis, & Winstead, 1984);

the cognitive approach (Perlman & Peplau, 1981); the phenomenological approach (Rogers, 1970); the existential approach (Сартр, 1992; Камю, 1992; Moustakas, 1975; Франкл, 2004; Ялом, 1999).

Under the psychodynamic approach, loneliness is regarded as a reflection of such personality traits as narcissism, megalomania and hostility. Representatives of the psychodynamic tradition absolutize the influence of intrapersonal factors on the origin and manifestation of loneliness. Zilboorg (1938), Sullivan (1953), Либерман & Либерман (2006) focus on the intrapersonal factors (personality traits, internal conflicts) which have loneliness as their consequence. Zilboorg (1938) believed that loneliness rests on the triad of causes such as early narcissism, megalomania and hostility of the surroundings. Fromm-Reichmann considers loneliness to be destructive and believes that it leads ultimately to the development of psychotic states. Highlighting the causes of loneliness, she emphasizes the detrimental consequence of premature weaning from mothering affection. Фромм (1996) asserts that human nature is unable to put up with isolation and loneliness. The feeling of loneliness has a fragmenting effect on personality which, in its turn, results in aggressiveness, violence, terrorism.

The interactional approach, first of all, emphasizes that loneliness is not solely a function of personality factors, nor of situation factors. Instead loneliness is the product of their combined (or interactive) effect. Secondly, while describing loneliness, Weiss (1973) meant social relationships, such as attachment, guidance and a sense of worth. He categorized loneliness into two types, which he believes have different antecedents and different affective responses. Emotional loneliness stems from the absence of an intimate figure or a close emotional attachment, such as a lover or a spouse. Social loneliness is a response to the absence of meaningful friendships or a sense of a community. A socially lonely person experiences boredom and feeling of being socially marginal.

The most salient aspect of *the cognitive approach* is its emphasis on cognition as a mediating factor between deficits in sociability and the experience of loneliness. Therefore, loneliness is a construct of consciousness. The representatives of cognitive approach believe that loneliness is caused by characteristic and situational factors as well as by the influence of the past and present experience on personality development.

Representatives of *the privacy approach* use “privacy” and “self-disclosure” concepts as a way of understanding loneliness. Like Weiss (1973), they believe that social relationships help the individual achieve various goals. Loneliness is caused by the absence of an appropriate social partner who could assist in achieving these goals. Loneliness is apt to occur when one’s interpersonal relationships lack the privacy needed for honest communication. The researchers sticking to this approach consider factors within both the individual and environment as leading to loneliness.

Yalom (1999) as one of representatives of the *existential approach* believed that isolation is intrinsic in our existence and emphasized that it is neither isolation from other persons with loneliness ensuing from it, nor internal isolation (from a part of own personality). It is fundamental isolation – both from other creatures (“the unbridgeable gap between oneself and any other being”) and the world (“the separation between the individual and the world”). Therefore, he classifies isolation into two types: existential and fundamental isolation, and considers several ways enabling to comprehend existential isolation – confrontation with death and freedom. It is the knowledge of “my death” that makes one fully realize that no one can die with one or for one. Freedom, which is understood as acceptance of responsibility for own life, implies own “authorship” of life and acceptance of the fact that there is no one else who creates or guards an individual.

Moustakas (1975) emphasizes the importance of distinguishing between loneliness anxiety and true loneliness. Loneliness anxiety is a system of defense mechanisms that

distracts people from dealing with crucial life questions and that motivates them constantly to seek activity with others. True loneliness stems from the reality of being alone and of facing life's ultimate experiences (i.e., birth, death, change, tragedy) alone. From Moustakas (1975) viewpoint, true loneliness can be a creative force. Existentialists thus encourage people to overcome their fear of loneliness and learn to use it positively.

Therefore, the conceptual provisions of existentialists (Moustakas, 1975; Yalom, 1999) are crucial for analysis of this issue, since they believe that an individual's ability of experiencing loneliness is a requisite condition of personality's shaping and development.

The analysis of major modern studies in the psychology of loneliness gives grounds to assert that issues related to positive loneliness experience are explored less than appropriate. Generally speaking, the positive sense of loneliness (loneliness as a resource) is that it is an integral part of human individuality development and of the socialization process. The positive potential of loneliness is implemented through the following of its functions: self-cognition function; self-regulation establishment function; creative activity and self-improvement function; psychophysical condition stabilization function. According to Андрусенко (1995) spiritual loneliness in its positive form involves shaping of an individual's "self-glorification", when search for forms of creative realization of own "Self" comes to the foreground. The capability to experience loneliness positively is currently studied by Андрусенко (1995), Майленовой (2001), Швалб (1991), Кон (1989), Неумоева (2005). The majority of researchers links the positive form of loneliness experience to the notion of separation and rigorously oppose to the notion of isolation. However, it should be emphasized that there is no uniform view on the interrelation and the system of these notions.

Results of analysis show that the problem of loneliness has age-specific boundaries. For the present study it is important that loneliness at the age of adolescence is inseparably associated with new psychological formations as well as with normative and psychological tasks of development. First of all, these are the tasks of personal and professional self-identification. At the age of adolescence, loneliness is associated with the main processes and phenomena of self-consciousness; it has an effect on how self-attitude and self-perception is shaped, as well as on the specific distinctive features and choice of the manner of behavior. At the adult age, loneliness ensues from unsolved life tasks, life failures which remain not "processed" by reflection, and disappointment in social interaction.

While analyzing literature, the authors highlighted the assumption that an individual's emotional maturity involves the ability to cope with loneliness positively (Винникот, 2002). A *scientific hypothesis* was put forward according to which the ability of experiencing the positive form of loneliness depends of the degree of maturity of an individual's emotional intellect. In a general sense, the emotional intellect (EI) involves the ability of cognition, comprehension and management of emotions; here both an individual's own emotions and emotions of other people are meant. Based on the existing concepts, Russian researcher Люсин (2009) suggested his own model of EI, which he understands as the ability to understand an individual's own emotions and emotions of other people and to control them. The EI construct has a dual nature – it is related to cognitive abilities and personality characteristics.

For the present empirical research the authors have chosen the notions of *loneliness*, *isolation*, *seclusion*. Evaluations of these notions enable to single out the notions in the structure of respondents' consciousness which are subjectively perceived as positive or resource-bearing. This allows further to correlate the perception of loneliness with the degree of emotional intellect maturity and thus support or reject the hypothesis that these two notions are interrelated.

The authors used SD technique (SD variant developed by Корчагина (2008) to study subjective evaluations provided by respondents and to build a semantic field of notions "loneliness", "isolation", "seclusion". The questionnaire by Люсин (2009) was used to

determine the degree of emotional intellect maturity. The quantitative analysis was made using the following techniques of statistical data processing: correlation analysis, parametric techniques for comparison of two samples. The research sample included 60 persons, of which 30 persons were at the age of adolescence (17-18 years old on the average), and 30 adult persons aged 40-60.

Results of the empirical research show that young people aged 17-18 evaluate the notion "loneliness" as destructive and negative (66,7% of total sample). Low scores by the factor of intensity – 0,2, 0,4 (70% of total sample) show that loneliness experience is regarded as a shallow phenomenon which does not have any significant influence on respondents' lives. Low scores by the factor of activity given by 73% of youth sample can be interpreted as low intensity of loneliness experience.

Young people also assess the notion of "isolation" as utterly destructive and believe that isolation has no objectively positive aspects. They evaluated the profoundness with which they perceive this notion with low scores. More than half of the sample represents uneasy emotional response to this state with middle-level intensity. 86,7% of respondents assess the notion of isolation as positive and prolific, with significant influence on life. More than half of the sample represents high intensity of youth separation experience and high emotional response to this phenomenon.

Therefore, the meaningful result obtained at this stage among young people is that separation is singled out as a phenomenon with the highest experience intensity and the largest positive capacity. Isolation is evaluated as an utterly negative phenomenon, loneliness is also perceived as a negative and destructive phenomenon.

In the group of adults aged 40-60 the results of the present research show that they see loneliness as an utterly negative and emotionally charged phenomenon, however, scores given to it by the factor of intensity and activity evidence that in their opinion it has little depth and high intensity. It should be mentioned that unlike youth sample, the sample of adults demonstrates high individual regularity and changeability of data. In such a case it is rather difficult to make general conclusions about the intensity of phenomenon experience for the group without taking account of individual scores.

76,7% of the adult sample represents negative evaluation of "isolation". 50% of the sample have high negative scores from "- 3" to "- 0.8", by the factor of intensity the scores range from "- 1" to "- 0,2". This is accompanied by high individual regularity of data.

The notion of separation has high positive capacity (over 60% of sample), however, unlike in the youth group, high intensity and profoundness were not recorded for this phenomenon.

Therefore, results of the present research confirm that the phenomenon of loneliness is evaluated on an exclusively subjective basis, and give grounds to mark out separation as a positive and resource-bearing state, and loneliness and isolation – as destructive and negative states. In the age of adolescence, the experience of separation as a positive manifestation of loneliness is more intensive and its evaluation by the majority of respondents of the youth sample is more emotionally charged. It should be emphasized once again that the phenomena related to loneliness experience are marked out as subjective and filled with individual meaning and sense, and this is manifested in wide-range differences between evaluations given to them. This confusion of notions by respondents requires more investigation with the aim of accurately determining the structure of the phenomenological field of loneliness.

That is why the primary data processing techniques DS gives the possibility to obtain the results of the fulfilment of each of the concepts of subjective content, and the representation of the group semantic space of loneliness can be analyzed due to the built up schedule of scattering frequencies. If one considers the distribution of estimations of factors, presented on the chart, a model of structure of consciousness, one can interpret this distribution as the place of each of the concepts in the group consciousness of the surveyed youth age (see Figure 1).

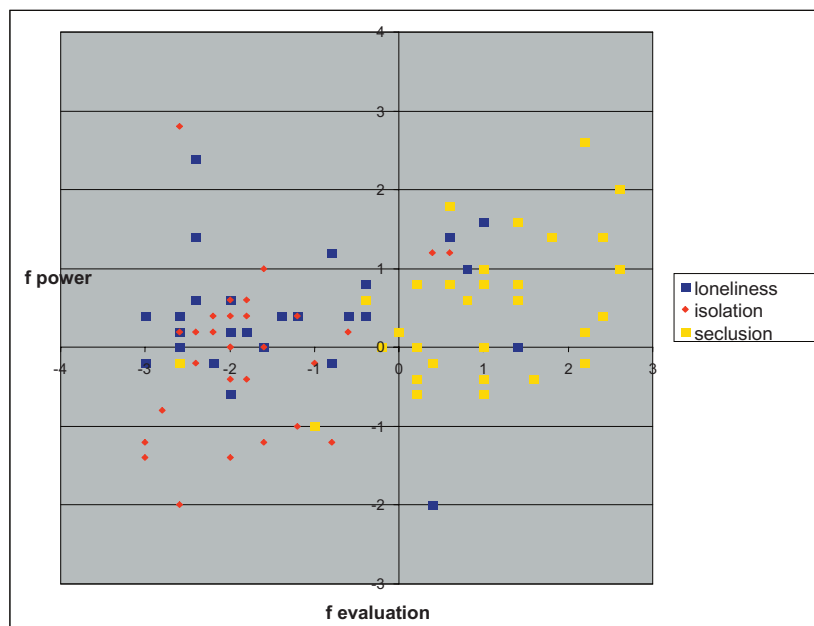


Figure 1. The scattering of assessments of the concepts of loneliness, isolation, seclusion for youth

The concept of seclusion occupies space in the positive X-axis categories. This is evidenced by the positive assessment of this concept under investigation. On the Y-axis high scores were distributed mainly in the positive pole. As already noted, this is interpreted as the attribution of the great impact of this phenomenon on life. It can be seen that the concept of loneliness and isolation occupy in comparison with the concept of seclusion of a narrower range for the Y-axis, and occupy the space of the negative pole of the X-axis (especially the concept of isolation). This can be interpreted as the provision a little depth to this concept by the researched, and the respective roles of these phenomena in their lives.

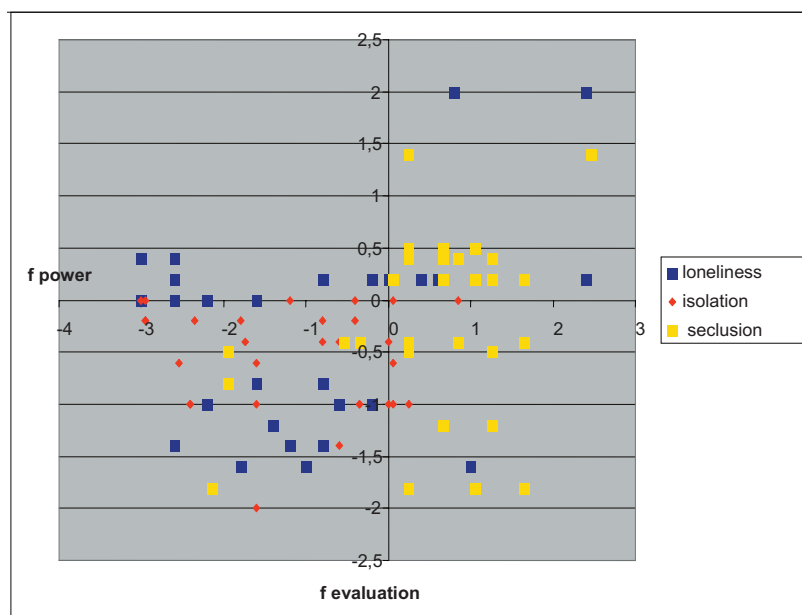


Figure 2. The scattering of assessments of the concepts of loneliness, isolation, seclusion for adults

It can be seen that the concept of loneliness and isolation take on the chart of one field among the negative values of X and Y. However, some estimates occupy space among positive values. Thus, although it is possible to trace a trend in the evaluation of these concepts in the group and the individual differences should not be neglected. Such a difference in the assessment of the same concepts for those people who were under research, notes the fact of the exclusiveness of subjectivity feelings of loneliness and isolation for different personalities. The seclusion in the structure of adult's consciousness also takes the positive pole; however, the difference in the experience of the depth and intensity of the phenomenon can be observed. The proximity of points of the graph, reflecting the concept of seclusion, until the average values of (0,5, - 0,5) show about refusal failure to provide by the adults of great importance and depth of this phenomenon.

By results of the analysis of the two charts it is possible to draw conclusions about the presentation of the concepts of loneliness, isolation, seclusion in the structure of consciousness of the groups of persons of youthful age and adults. There is low differentiation of the concepts of loneliness and isolation, the perception of them as negative and destructive phenomena. At the same time seclusion is rated as a positive phenomenon, but has the difference in the power and the activity of its experiences of the two age groups. It should be stressed once more the allocation of phenomena connected with the experience of loneliness as subjective, filled with individual value and meaning, which manifests itself in a wide range of differences between their estimates.

In the "EMIN" technique by Люсин (2009) the scores of emotional intellect are evaluated using two scales: 1) interpersonal emotional intellect (understanding emotions of other people and control of such emotions) – InterPEI; 2) intrapersonal emotional intellect (understanding own emotions and control of such emotions) – IntraPEI. By summing up values of these scales the ratio of general emotional intellect – GEI is obtained. Comparative results are given in Table 1.

Table 1. Average values of InterPI, IntraPI, GEI for youth and adults

Scales	Youth, average values	Adults, average values
InterPEI (interpersonal emotional intellect)	42,5	44,4
IntraPEI (intrapersonal emotional intellect)	39,6	44,5
GEI (general emotional intellect)	82,1	87,9

The table above shows that, on the average, the general emotional intellect ratio for adults is higher than for young people and has a statistically significant difference under Student's t – criterion for two independent samples ($t = -2,172$, with $p = 0.034$ ($p > 0,05$)). In other words, adults understand and control their own emotions much better than young people. It can be assumed that this ability is attributable to own life experience gained by an adult person.

Based on correlation of evaluations of the notion "loneliness" and EI ratios, it is possible to arrive at the conclusion that positive evaluation of the phenomenon of loneliness does not depend on high figures of emotional intellect maturity. Results of correlation analysis under r-Pearson criterion establish no association between evaluation of notions of the semantic field of loneliness and the degree of emotional intellect maturity ($r = -0,019$ with statistical significance $p = 0,88$ ($p > 0,05$)). There is also no association between isolation and general emotional intellect ($r = -0,04$ with statistical significance $p = 0,722$ ($p > 0,05$)) and separation and GEI ($r = -0,011$ with $p = 0,93$ ($p > 0,05$)).

Thus, the conclusion about the denial of a scientific hypothesis has to be accepted. It is obvious that the understanding of their own and others' emotions, the ability to manage

one's emotional state is not a determinant in the decision of the poles of the experiences of loneliness. These results give grounds for the continuation of studies in the direction of the search for personal, social, socio-cultural determinants that is positive, resource feeling of loneliness.

Generalizing the results of the study, some **conclusions** can be drawn:

1. The theoretical analysis enables to assume that issues related to positive experience of loneliness, particularly, its probability determinant, are still explored less than desirable. Generally speaking, the positive sense of loneliness (loneliness as a resource) is that it is an integral part of human individuality development and of the socialization process. The positive potential of loneliness is implemented through the following of its functions: self-cognition function; self-regulation establishment function; creative activity and self-improvement function; psychophysical condition stabilization function.
2. Loneliness is regarded as a cross-disciplinary phenomenon having an existential, social, personal and complex nature. Changing views on loneliness can be seen not only within the framework of different cultures and times but also within the framework of theoretical approaches in the system of the psychological science as such.
3. The empirical analysis proves that the evaluation, profoundness and intensity of loneliness, isolation and separation experience does not depend on the understanding of own and other individuals' emotional states, empathy, ability to control the expression of emotions, or emotional expression. The determining factors of the subjective positive experience of loneliness should apparently be sought in other areas – age, social situation, personality characteristics, own experience of living through different states which are close to loneliness. Thus, results of this research confirm that separation as a positive implication of the state of loneliness is felt more intensively at the age of adolescence, and the majority of youth sample gave more emotionally charged evaluation to this state, which can be explained by the tasks inherent in this age period – the tasks of self-cognition and self-establishment, personal and social self-identification.
4. The data of the empirical research are significant since, with further research efforts required, they allow to manage the state of separation as an additional resource at the age of adolescence and make it possible to transform and redirect the negative vector of loneliness experience in the productive way facilitating ultimate personality development. Understanding that solitude at the age of adolescence is a necessary state opens new prospects for psychological counselling practice and therapy. Recognition that loneliness can be perceived positively offers new prospects for the practice of psychological assistance, particularly, in order to develop applied approaches aimed at actualization of the positive resource of loneliness to prevent the destructive effects it may have on personality.
5. Constructive perception of loneliness, positive experience of feeling of loneliness is a prerequisite for personal growth, self-actualization and development of the creative potential of individuals of any age, as well as the effective integration in society.

Results of the empirical research enable to outline the following areas for further research of issues associated with loneliness experience: firstly, those related to determinants of subjective experience of loneliness as a positive phenomenon and, secondly, focus on the structure and functional links, subtle differentiation and demarcation of loneliness and such states as isolation and separation.

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THE POSITIVE EXPERIENCING OF LONELINESS AS A FACTOR OF PERSONALITY SOCIALIZATION IN THE SOCIETY

Summary

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The article focuses on the theoretical analysis of such a phenomenon as loneliness and the forms of experiencing it, presents the urgency of the study of loneliness as a subjective positive experience.

The goal of empirical research is revealed, which is to explore the features of experience of loneliness as a subjective phenomenon and study the determinants of the positive aspects of this experience.

The theoretical analysis showed that the issues related to positive experience of loneliness, particularly, its probability determinant, are still explored less than desirable. It has been disclosed that the positive sense of loneliness (loneliness as a resource) is that it is an integral part of human individuality development and of the socialization process, the positive potential of loneliness is implemented through the following of its functions: self-cognition function; self-regulation establishment function; creative activity and self-improvement function; psychophysical condition stabilization function.

It is shown that loneliness is regarded as a cross-disciplinary phenomenon having an existential, social, personal and complex nature, changing views on loneliness can be seen not only within the framework of different cultures and epochs but also within the framework of different theoretical approaches in the system of psychological science as such.

Two trends of the study of the phenomenon of loneliness have been defined: 1) interpretation of loneliness as a mental phenomenon or a subjective experience (taking into account its possible positive forms); 2) regarding loneliness as a negative state and experience.

It has been analyzed that the problem of loneliness has specific limits in every age and in adolescence loneliness is inextricably linked with psychological neoplasms as well as with normative and psychological tasks of development. First of all, these are the tasks of personal and professional self-identification. At the age of adolescence, loneliness is associated with the main processes and phenomena of self-consciousness, it has an effect on how self-attitude and self-perception is shaped, as well as on the specific characterological features and choice of the manner of behavior. At the adult age, loneliness ensues from unsolved life tasks, life failures which remain not “processed” by reflection, and disappointment in social interaction.

It is concluded that the evaluation, profoundness and intensity of loneliness, isolation and separation experience does not depend on the understanding of own and other individuals’ emotional

states, empathy, ability to control the expression of emotions, or emotional expression. The determining factors of the subjective positive experience of loneliness should apparently be sought in other areas – age, social situation, personality characteristics, own experience of living through different states which are close to loneliness. Results of research confirm that separation as a positive implication of the state of loneliness is felt more intensively at the age of adolescence, and the majority of youth sample gave more emotionally charged evaluation to this state, which can be explained by the tasks inherent in this age period – the tasks of self-cognition and self-establishment, personal and social self-identification.

It is shown that constructive perception of loneliness, positive experience of feeling of loneliness is a prerequisite for personal growth, self-actualization and development of the creative potential of individuals of any age, as well as the effective integration in society.