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## **Goal Attitudes of Schools and Psychological Readiness Towards Developmental Conflict Resolution in Youth as the Educational Result**

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*On the basis of cultural-historical psychology, constructive psychology of conflict and existential psychology the paper discussed the construct of psychological readiness towards developmental conflict resolution in youth that is represented by dispositional and operational readiness. The aim of the research was to study conditions of the formation process of operational psychological readiness towards developmental conflict resolution in youth at school. Results of the study indicated that students at school where educational goals and tasks are coordinated with actions with high dispositional psychological readiness towards developmental conflict resolution in youth at the transition to High School demonstrated high operational psychological readiness towards developmental conflict resolution in youth. The methodology of this study could be used for the evaluation of educational environment of schools.*

*Keywords: psychological readiness towards conflict resolution, developmental conflicts, youth, autonomy, responsibility, educational environment of schools.*

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### **Introduction**

Since the concept of developmental conflicts was postulated in different theories (S.Freud, E.Erickson, L.Vygotsky) the idea that contradiction is the major driving force in the process of development is not modern anymore. On the conflict stage in the critical phase of adolescence developmental crisis adolescents understand the absence of their individual resources to bring ideals into life (K.Polivanova).

Psychological readiness in ontogenesis is the aspiration of a child to a new more mature status (L.I.Bershedova, 1999), constructive psychology of conflict insisted that the child may not be ready

for the transition to the new age period (Khasan B.I., 1997).

In our work we distinguish two types of psychological readiness of youngsters towards developmental conflict resolution in Youth: 1. dispositional readiness as their psychological well-being and their feeling of the current age at the transition from Secondary to Senior School; 2. operational readiness as the owning of personal resources that are necessary at the transition to Youth.

From the standpoint of cultural-historical psychology we can propose that the school has the specific role in the formation of psychological

readiness towards developmental conflict resolution in Youth. Nowadays there are some articles that indicated the role of educational system on the personal development of students at Senior School<sup>1</sup> and the role of school type on the professional self-determination (Golovei L.A., 2011). However we can state that the topic viewing the school as the factor of influence on the personal development in the transition to High School is rare in modern psychology.

### Theoretical framework

We consider youth as the period of searching for meaning in life (Gorlova N.V., 2011). Some theorists wrote that young people search for meaning in life in adolescence<sup>2</sup>, others expected that this process last during adolescence and youth<sup>3</sup>. Third point of view (search for meaning in life is a characteristic of youth) is broad in modern psychology<sup>4</sup>.

We consider that the main developmental conflict in adolescence is the actualized contradiction where aspirations of youngsters on their new stage of autonomy come across the resistance of adults that may appear as different

limitations and even as expansion of adult towards teenager’s personal resources (their time, space, etc.). The basic developmental conflict in Youth is the actualized contradiction “meaning of life towards meaninglessness of life” that may appear in significance of existential topics (such issues as meaning of activity, including meaning of life), in long-term goal setting, selection of the domain for the personal professional realization, choosing of partner in romantic relationships.

In our work we use the construct of dispositional psychological readiness towards developmental conflict resolution in Youth that consisted of few components (see Fig. 1):

- Exhaustiveness of topics that determine developmental conflicts in Adolescence (situations of expansions on personal resources of youngsters – their time, space, image, personal things etc.);
- Significance of topics that determine developmental conflicts in Youth (long-term goal setting, selection of the domain for the personal professional realization, choosing of partner in romantic relationships);

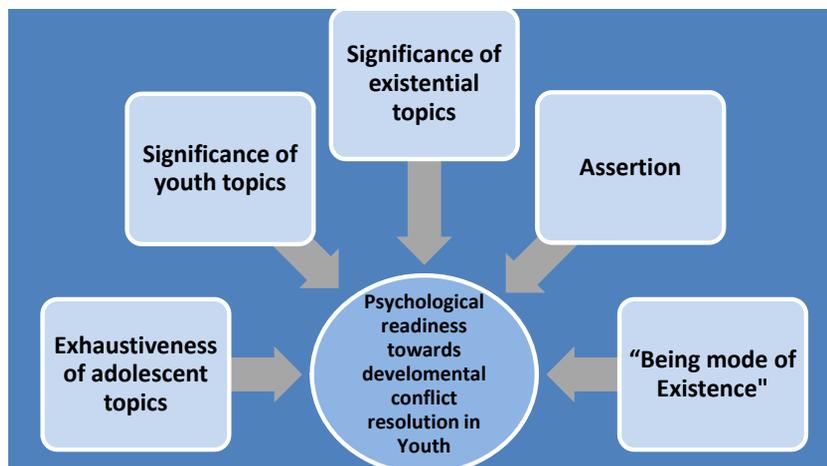


Fig. 1. The construct of dispositional psychological readiness towards developmental conflict resolution in Youth

- Significance of existential topics, such issues as meaning (including meaning of life);
- Definite strategies of conflict resolution towards developmental conflicts in Adolescence and Youth (Assertion of personal standpoint and “Being mode of Existence”).

We consider that operational psychological readiness towards developmental conflict resolution in Youth is adolescent’s personal resources helpful in the situation of transition from adolescence to youth:

1. internal locus of control;
2. high meaning-in-life orientations and general meaningfulness of life;
3. tolerance for ambiguity;
4. the balance between chronological and psychological ages (or lower psychological age than chronological ones).

### **Statement of the problem**

Theoretical considerations suggested that educational system and type of school could play part in the personal development of students of High School and in their professional self-determination.

The main question of this study is the question about the conditions of the formation process of operational psychological readiness towards developmental conflict resolution in youth at school.

We consider that the problem in this sphere is that various schools today declare that they work on the specific educational results and competencies but their goal attitudes could be only claims without any actions that will form declared educational results.

Modern educational theorists and psychologists expect that educational environment is determined by concrete tasks that school set and solve in its practice and appeared in the

choice of tools and creation of conditions that can solve stated tasks. Educational environment is substantially assessed by effects and results in personal, social and intellectual development of children. (Rybtsov V.V., 2010).

That is why the main aim of our work is to determine how high dispositional psychological readiness towards developmental conflict resolution in youth corresponds with high operational psychological readiness at schools where the formation of components of operational readiness is announced in goal attitudes and where it is confirmed by formed educational results.

Our general hypothesis is: students with high dispositional psychological readiness at schools where goal attitudes correspond with real actions towards formation of operational readiness had high operational psychological readiness.

### **Methods**

#### *Participants*

The participants of the study were 117 (51 boys, 66 girls) ninth grades in three schools located in Krasnoyarsk, the large-sized city and the capital of the region. The median age of the participants was 15,4 years. The data collections were made in spring 2012, at the completion of the last grade of comprehensive school. The questionnaires were administered at school during school hours, but the filling in of the questionnaires and participation in the study was voluntary.

#### *Characteristics of schools in the study<sup>5</sup>*

In this section we used materials of the study “School factor in biographies of graduating high school students” with our co-authorship. Schools in this project were selected by experts from Board of Education depending on status and substantial contribution of school. Schools in the study were divided into 3 types: schools with low parent’s capital (stagnation school), schools

that have had stable academic results for the last few years, without any special programmes (average-sized schools), special subject schools with advanced study or schools with educational concept grounded on philosophical basis (conceptual schools) (Novopashina L.A., Ustus Y.I., Grigorieva E.G., Dorokhova A.V., Khasan B.I., 2013).

In our study there were three schools: two schools of conceptual type (gymnasium as school with philosophy and lyceum as school with advanced study) and one school of stagnation type. In our study gymnasium was named “School 1”, lyceum – “School 2” and school of stagnation type – “School 3”.

Besides expert’s evaluation of school’s types we also analyzed educational environment of schools by their goal attitudes. We used two documents that were placed on the official Internet sites of schools to determine goal attitudes of schools. Those were public reports of schools about their activity and programmes of development for the next few years.

There were only two schools that declared the formation of autonomy and responsibility as the goals of educational process (School 1 and School 2). According to E.Kaliteevskaya, D.Leontiev (2006), we consider internal locus of control as the measurement of responsibility. Internal locus of control in different spheres (its subscales) will be additional measurements of responsibility.

We divided all sample on six groups:

| № | Dispositional readiness (Readiness) | № | Dispositional non-readiness (Non-readiness) |
|---|-------------------------------------|---|---|
| 1 | Dispositional readiness, School 1   | 4 | Dispositional non-readiness, School 1       |
| 2 | Dispositional readiness, School 2   | 5 | Dispositional non-readiness, School 2       |
| 3 | Dispositional readiness, School 3   | 6 | Dispositional non-readiness, School 3       |

Thus our statistical hypothesis is:

Students from groups “Readiness” of School 1 and School 2 where the formation of responsibility is declared in goal attitudes and is confirmed by real actions demonstrate higher results on general internal locus of control and its subscales than students from group “Readiness” of School 3 that don’t declare the responsibility as the educational result.

### Measures

1. Level of subjective control (Rotter J., adaptation in Russian of Bagin E.F, Golyunkina E.L., Etkind A.M., 1984) – measurement of internal locus of control and it’s subscales (Internal locus for achievement (ILa), failures (ILf), family relations (IL-Family), formal business relations (ILb), interpersonal relations (IL-IR), health (ILh)). Average mean for internal locus of control is equal to 5,5 and higher.

2. Author’s inventory “Topics-situations” (inco-authorship with B.I.Khasan)–measurement of dispositional type of psychological readiness towards developmental conflict resolution in Youth (measurement of exhaustiveness of adolescent topics, significance of youth topics, significance of existential topics, assertion and “Being mode of Existence”).

### Results

First we calculated all general scales and subscales of Level of subjective control. We calculated also general coefficient of dispositional readiness of “Topics-situations”.

We constructed results on readiness and non-readiness using the formula  $M \pm \text{Standard deviation}$ . Than we divided results on readiness ( $> M + \text{St.dev.}$ ), and non-readiness ( $< M - \text{St.dev.}$ ) (see Fig. 2).

As can be seen from Fig. 2, 15,38% of the sample (18 students) belong to the group

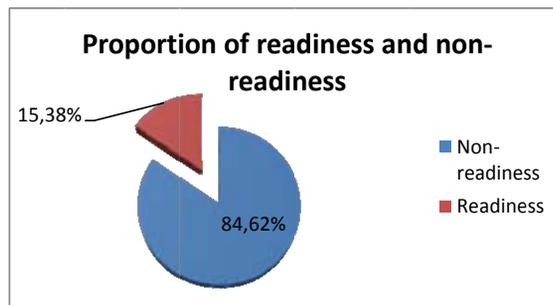


Fig. 2. Proportion of dispositional readiness and non-readiness in the main sample (117 students)

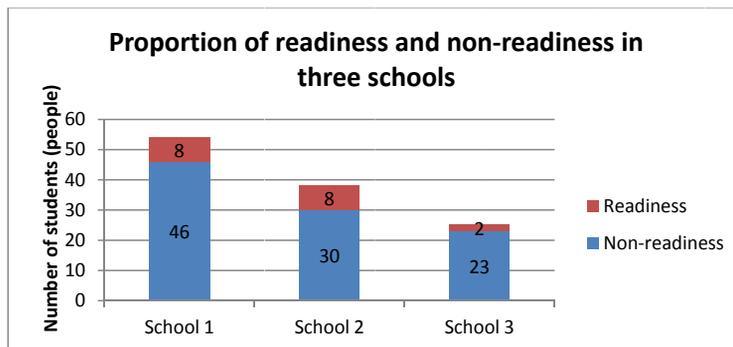


Fig. 3. Proportion of dispositional readiness and non-readiness in three schools

“readiness”, 84,62% of the sample (99 students) belong to the group “non-readiness”.

As can be seen from Fig. 3, the proportion of dispositional readiness and dispositional non-readiness in schools in the sample varied from 21% of students at School 2 (8 people) and 15% of students at School 1 (8 people) to 8% of students at School 3 (2 people).

We used Kruskal-Wallis *H* criterion (see Table 1) to compare all groups (6), 3 groups “readiness” separately and 3 groups “non-readiness” separately. We used Mann-Whitney *U* criterion (see Table 1) to receive additional results on pair-wise comparison of groups “readiness” and “non-readiness” separately in each school.

As can be seen at Table 1, there are 7 significant differences on general locus of control and its subscales between all six groups in the study, 6 significant differences between

groups “readiness” of School 1, School 2 and School 3.

Students of School 1 of group “Readiness” had higher results on general locus of control ( $p < 0,01$ ), internal locus of control for failures ( $p < 0,05$ ), internal locus of control in formal business relations ( $p < 0,05$ ) and internal locus of control in interpersonal relations ( $p < 0,01$ ) than students from group “Non-readiness” of the same school.

Fig. 4 and Fig. 5 demonstrated general internal locus of control and internal locus of control for achievement of groups “readiness” and “non-readiness”. Group “readiness” of School 1 has significantly higher results than groups “readiness” of School 2 and 3. Their results are higher than average mean of internal locus of control (5,5) and they are also higher than results if group “non-readiness” from the same school. Group “readiness” of School 2 has significantly

Table 1. Comparison of groups “readiness” and “non-readiness” of School 1, School 2, School 3 on general locus of control and its subscales

| Variable                                    | Statistical criterion |         |       |                |          |         |            |             |            |
|---|-----------------------|---------|-------|----------------|----------|---------|------------|-------------|------------|
|   | Kruskal-Wallis H      |         |       | Mann-Whitney U |          |         |            |             |            |
|   | Comparing groups      |         |       |                |          |         |            |             |            |
|   | 1, 2, 3               | 4, 5, 6 | All 6 | 1 and 4        | 2 and 5  | 3 and 6 | 1 and 3    | 1 and 2     | 2 and 3    |
| General Internal locus of control           | *                     |         | **    | 1>4<br>**      | 2<5<br>* |         | 1 > 3<br>* | 1 > 2<br>** |            |
| Internal locus for achievement              | **                    | **      | **    |                |          |         | 1 > 3<br>* | 1 > 2<br>** |            |
| Internal locus for failures                 | **                    | **      | **    | 1>4<br>*       |          |         | 1 > 3<br>* | 1 > 2<br>** |            |
| Internal locus for family relations         | *                     | **      | **    |                |          |         |            | 1 > 2<br>** |            |
| Internal locus in formal business relations | **                    | **      | **    | 1>4<br>*       |          |         | 1 > 3<br>* | 1 > 2<br>** |            |
| Internal locus in interpersonal relations   | **                    | **      | **    | 1>4<br>**      |          |         | 1 > 3<br>* | 1 > 2<br>** | 2 > 3<br>* |
| Internal locus for health                   |                       | **      | **    |                | 2<5<br>* |         |            | 1 > 2<br>*  |            |

\*\*p < 0,01; \* p < 0,05; Stat.tendency – differences on statistical tendency.

Groups: 1 – readiness, School 1; 2 – readiness, School 2; 3 – readiness, School 3; 4 – non-readiness, School 1; 5 – non-readiness, School 2; 6 – non-readiness, School 3.

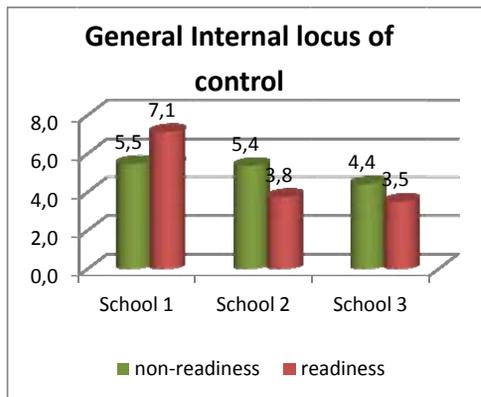


Fig. 4. General Internal locus of control of groups "readiness" and "non-readiness"

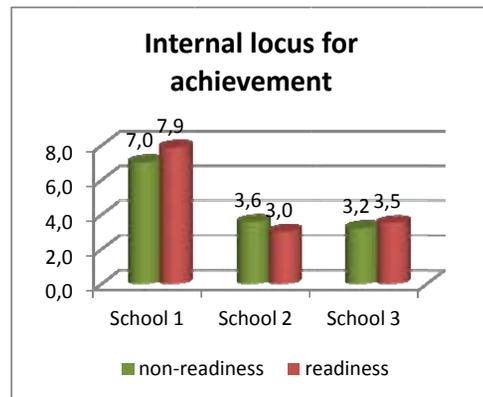


Fig. 5. Internal locus of control for achievement (IIa) of groups "readiness" and "non-readiness"

lower results than group “non-readiness” from the same school.

Fig. 6 and Fig. 7 demonstrated internal locus of control for failures and internal locus of control for family relationships of groups “readiness” and “non-readiness”. Group

“readiness” of School 1 had significantly higher results than groups “readiness” of School 2 and 3. Their results are higher than average mean of internal locus of control (5,5) and they are also higher than results if group “non-readiness” from the same school.

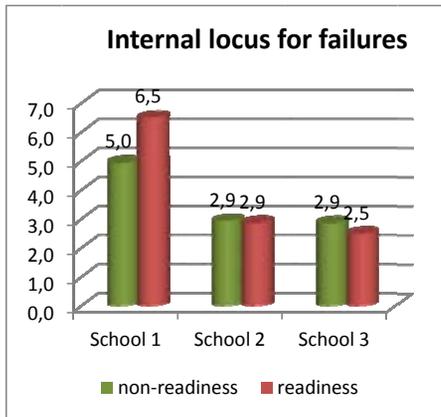


Fig. 6. Internal locus for failures (ILf) of groups "readiness" and "non-readiness"

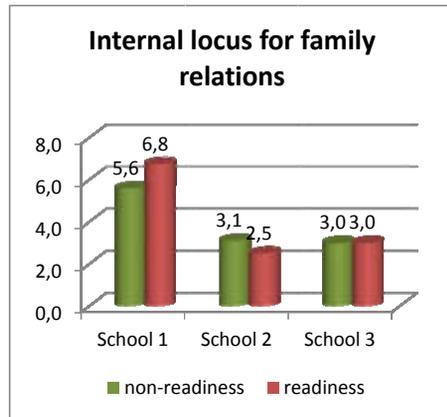


Fig. 7. Internal locus for family relations (IL-Family) of groups "readiness" and "non-readiness"

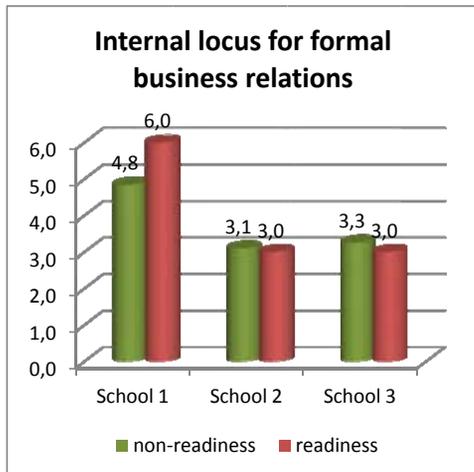


Fig. 8. Internal locus for formal business relations (ILb) of groups "readiness" and "non-readiness"

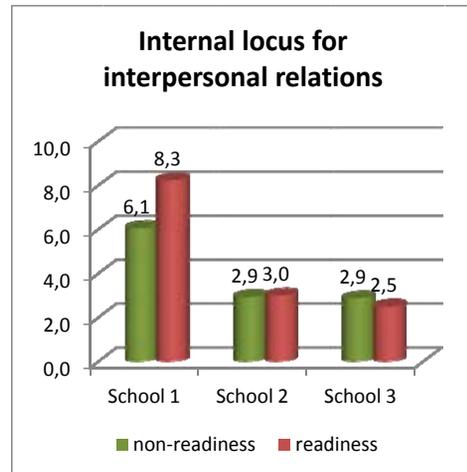


Fig. 9. Internal locus for interpersonal relations (IL-IR) of groups "readiness" and "non-readiness"

Fig. 8 and Fig. 9 demonstrated internal locus of control for formal business relationships and internal locus of control for interpersonal relationships of groups "readiness" and "non-readiness". Group "readiness" of School 1 has significantly higher results than groups "readiness" of School 2 and 3. Their results are higher than average mean of internal locus of control (5,5) and they are also higher than results if group "non-readiness" from the same school.

There are differences between "readiness" groups (Fig. 10). Group "non-readiness" of School 1 has significantly higher results than groups "non-readiness" from School 2 and School 3. Group "readiness" from School 2 has significantly lower results than group "non-readiness" from the same school.

### Discussion

We expected that students from groups "Readiness" of School 1 and School 2 where

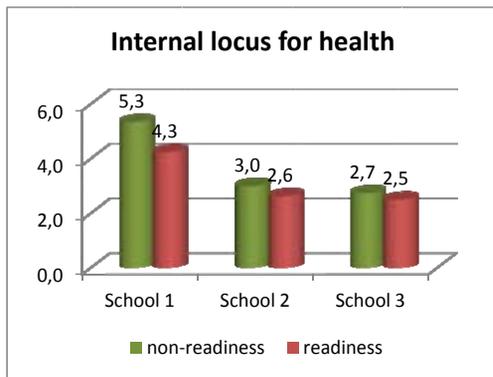


Fig. 10. Internal locus for health (ILh) of groups "readiness" and "non-readiness"

the formation of responsibility is declared in goal attitudes and is confirmed by real actions demonstrate higher results on general internal locus of control and its subscales than students from group "Readiness" of School 3 that don't declare the responsibility as the educational result.

Our hypothesis is confirmed. Group "Readiness" of School 1 demonstrated higher results on general internal locus of control and its components than students from group "Readiness" of School 3.

Students from group "Readiness" of School 2 where the formation of responsibility was also declared in goal attitudes didn't demonstrate general internal locus of control and its components. That means the contradiction between the goal attitudes towards the formation of responsibility and real actions in formation of that educational result.

Furthermore interesting results of this study are the differences between groups "Dispositional Readiness" and "Dispositional Non-readiness" of School 1. Students who felt themselves ready to developmental transition to Youth demonstrated the general internal locus of control and internal

locus of control in few spheres (for failures, in formal business relations and interpersonal relations) in comparison with students who felt themselves not ready for the transition.

In other words students with dispositional readiness felt themselves responsible for their failures and expected them as the result of their own activity but not the result of circumstances of other people. They considered themselves responsible for the sphere of business and interpersonal relations.

### Conclusion

This article was dedicated to the main question of the study about the conditions that form one of components of the operational psychological readiness towards developmental conflict resolution in youth at school (the responsibility).

We found out that concrete tasks set by schools as educational results should be supported by concrete steps in the process of problem solving in their practice and by the choice of means and creation of conditions that could form the declared result.

Students of school where the formation of responsibility was claimed as goal attitude and the responsibility was really formed demonstrated this ability as internal locus of control.

Thus we can resume that the educational environment of school could be evaluated not only from goal attitudes towards the development of autonomy and responsibility but from the standpoint of real results in the personal development of students.

### Acknowledgments

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## **Целевые установки школ и психологическая готовность к разрешению конфликтов развития в юности как образовательный результат**

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*В статье на основе культурно-исторического подхода, конструктивной психологии конфликта, а также экзистенциальной психологии рассматривается конструкт психологической готовности к разрешению конфликтов развития в юношеском возрасте, представленный диспозиционной и оперативной готовностью. Целью исследования стало изучение условий формирования оперативной психологической готовности к разрешению конфликтов развития в юности в школе. Результаты исследования показали, что в школе, где цели и задачи на образование согласованы с действиями, учащиеся при переходе в старшую ступень со сформированной диспозиционной готовностью к разрешению конфликтов развития в юности демонстрируют также и высокий уровень оперативной готовности к разрешению конфликтов развития в юности. Методология исследования может быть применена для оценки образовательной среды школ.*

*Ключевые слова: психологическая готовность к разрешению конфликтов, конфликты развития, юношеский возраст, ответственность, образовательная среда школы.*

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