THE PERESTROIKA GENERATION AND THE GENERATION
OF POST-PERESTROIKA YOUTH IN RUSSIA:
DYNAMICS OF ADAPTIVE CAPABILITIES OF PERSONALITY

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Abstract

This study has scientific novelty, since there have been no systematic studies of
personality in the compared groups of “perestroika” and “post-perestroika” youth up to now. We have compared the groups of youth born in 1987 (medical students, the second year of study, Yaroslavl State Medical University), 120 persons (60 boys and 60 girls), and in 1997 (completely identical to the first group), 197 persons (67 boys and 130 girls). We have applied the 16-PF technique for psychodiagnosics. In the “post-perestroika youth” sample, in the group of factors regulating emotional reactivity of personality, there has been significant growth of the last three factors. All the scales providing the efficient intellectual activity have grown. The scales associated with the volitional regulation of activity have significantly and evenly increased their meanings. The scales testing the relationships skills in the microgroup have increased less than three previous groups. At last, the scales providing wide social contacts have enhanced in the minimal degree. A person included in the transformation of society wins in the experience of the remote perspective of developing his qualities but appears to be relatively worse adjusted to current everyday life.

Keywords: health, development, personality, Russian youth, perestroika, perestroika generation, post-perestroika generation

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Relevance

In the Russian culture, the notion of health is most closely associated with the category of development. The mechanisms of mental (psychological) adaptation are also largely formed throughout lifetime. Therefore, we cannot overestimate the role of the early stages of the psyche’s ontogenesis (Zuev, 2013; Khotkina, 2013; Krawatzek, 2013; Kelly, 2013; Levashov, 2015; Sadykova, Khairullina, Ustinova, Pelkova, & Efremova, 2015). The forming influence of the environment on the development of the adaptive abilities of personality during these periods was analyzed in a number of studies (Nikolaeva, 2016; Aboud, Yousafzai, 2015). Using the principle of examining phenomena in their development and results of psychodiagnostics of youth’s personality (born during different periods of Russia’s establishment as a state), it is possible to evaluate risks of developing traumatic responses to the social and political events, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, to learn more about compensatory mechanisms of the multifaceted process of personality development. The 16-PF questionnaire is widely used in both psychodiagnostics of norm and evaluation of risk for mental maladaptation. In view of this, this issue was included in the study program.

State of the problem

For the last decades, the Russian society performed wide-scale transformations (Zhuravleva, 2006). In 1985, the political elite of the country launched the campaign on restructuring the society (perestroika). Life of the society was divided into the time “before perestroika”, “perestroika period” (1985-2000) and “post-perestroika period” (from the end of 1990s up to now). The formation conditions of these three “youth generations” are significantly different, as the bulk of the events covering person’s activity during these periods differs significantly (still, they reflected social dynamics) (Khairullina, & Sadykova, 2014; Ustinova, Rudov, Kostyleva, Vladimirova, & Kulishova, 2016; Inggs, 2015).

On the one hand, during perestroika, the crisis of ideology occurred and, therefore, opening perspectives of discussions about different variants for the future appeared. On the other hand, a significant reduction of the level of material life, loss of life perspective acutely
perceived by parents, and severe economic troubles destroyed system of social support for families... In subjects tested in 2006, all these experiences reflected on their personal peculiarities (Berezin, Miroshnikov, & Sokolova, 2011).

In the post-perestroika years (the beginning of the XXI century), socio-economic and socio-politic situation in the country more or less settled down, there were the signs of sustainable development of the society toward the multifaceted opportunities for the personality formation. However, the reflection of goals on the development (plans for the future) remains an important life challenge. Therefore, a high level of tension was possibly compensated by a high level of peoples’ intelligence in life planning (Artukhov, Shulmin, Kozlov, & Prikhodko, 2011).

**Materials and methods**

Two groups of young people of the similar age, sex, and social status were included in the study. The first group (120 persons - 60 males and 60 females) comprised young people born in 1987, the students of the General Medicine Department at the Yaroslavl State Medical University. The second group (197 persons - 67 males and 130 females) included young people born in 1997, the students of the same university. Both groups underwent psychodiagnostical examination in the spring term, in 2006 and 2016 respectively.

The article represents the results obtained by means of 16-PF personality test adapted in the Yaroslavl State University named after P.G. Demidov and used by the group of researchers at all stages of the study (in 1992, 2006 and 2016). More than 10 psychodiagnostical techniques were used at various stages of the study. This paper provides the comparative analysis of only two groups of subjects: born in 1987 (perestroika generation) and 1997 (post-perestroika generation).

**Results and their discussion**

To reveal the statistical accuracy of differences according to the scales of 16-PF questionnaire between groups of students of 2006 and 2016, Student t-test was used for independent samples. A chi square test was used to define normal data distribution. The results are shown in Table 1.
Table 1.

The values of the Student t-test according to the 16-PF scales for 2006 (n=120) and 2016 (n=197) samples.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>16-PF factors</th>
<th>Average 2006</th>
<th>Average 2016</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Factor A.</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0.10.</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factor B</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4.87</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factor C</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1.62</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factor E</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2.86</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factor F</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factor G</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2.52</td>
<td>0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factor H</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>2.35</td>
<td>0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factor I</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3.53</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factor L</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1.40</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factor M</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5.90</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factor N</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4.39</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factor O</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5.31</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factor Q1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2.86</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factor Q2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4.83</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factor Q3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factor Q4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4.23</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the framework of R. Cattells’ approach, a dynamics of adaptive youth capabilities according to the five basic groups of personal characteristics can be analyzed, as follows: emotional regulation of activity; intellectual characteristics of personality; volitional regulation of behavior; personality adaptation in micro-groups, and, at last, adaptation of personality in a broad social context.

It was revealed that the scales closely associated with the emotional regulation of activity (the group involves C, I, O, Q4 factors) changed (except for C factor – “Ego power”) with a high degree of accuracy.

Considering these findings in ascending order of changes it is clear that Factor I (pole – “emotional sensibility, vulnerability”) increased by two points. The average increase of Factor O (pole – “proneness to the sense of guilty, anxiety, sensibility to external approval)
was the same (by two raw points). As for the Q4 Factor – “high tension” (“frustration, excessive fatigue, irritation”), it increased as much as by three points.

Moreover, the Q4/C ratio, which gives researchers generalized evaluation of emotional sustainability of personality, generally increased and changed toward the weakened control of experiences (the values of Q4 increased by three points, while the value of Factor C (“Ego power”) remained unchanged). The ratio of the scales under analysis did not exceed one that is considered to be a critical value for diagnosing maladaptive nature of stress (Aboud & Yousafzai, 2015). However, in 2006, it was less and, therefore, the regulation of behavior from mood fluctuations was more significant.

In general, it can be assumed that post-perestroika generation appeared to be more emotionally vulnerable.

The scales reflecting the efficiency of intellectual characteristics of personality (B, E, M, N, Q1) increased in each component.

Considering our findings in ascending order of changes, it is possible to assume that the scores of scale Q1 (“radicalism”) increased by one point, while the scores of scales E (in this context “competitiveness, obstinacy, critical attitude to authorities”), M (“imagination”), and N (“shrewdness, ambition, cautiousness, cunningness, diplomacy”) increased by two points. As for the B scale scores - intelligence itself (ability to catch the information quickly, wide intellectual interests), they increased by three points.

The results of the study show that post-perestroika generation is, first of all, the generation of young people with “brains”, “wide knowledge” and “desire and ability to defend their viewpoint”.

The scales included in the volitional regulation of behavior (E, G, H, Q3) demonstrated a two-point increase: E (leadership development), G (“strong Super Ego”), H (resolution, courage), and Q3 (“control over desires and degree of the awareness of social demands”).

Generally, the scores of the quality of volitional regulation of behavior (first of all, in social plan) significantly improved, the behavior became more consistent and more appropriate to the internally formed goals.
There was an increase in the majority of scales providing micro group adaptation of personality (E, G, L, N, Q2). The values of scale L (“suspiciousness, vulnerability, envy”) did not increase, which is a favorable sign in the evaluation of personal dynamics.

As for the rest, all the results of scales increased significantly by a mean of two raw points: E – “leadership aptitudes”; G – “responsibility in relationships”, “diligence”; N – “cautiousness”, “prudence”, “gentleness in relationships”; Q2 – “independence from the group”, “quick wit”, “generation of one’s ideas”. It can be stated that post-perestroika youth generation demonstrates more efficient skills of interpersonal communication than perestroika generation.

The last group represents scales providing the adaptation of personality in a broad social context (A, F, H). In this group, there were no statistically significant changes in two out of three scales, namely no dynamics in A (“openness”, “sociability”, “empathy”) and F (“impulsiveness”, “high optimism” and “negligence”) scales. The values of H Factor (courage, in-touch capabilities, resolution) increased by two points.

Therefore, the study shows that the development of personality in external contacts and relationships significantly yields to the increase of internal resource of adaptive behavior. As we have noted before (Uryvaev et al., 2011) perestroika generation made a step towards personal characteristics in comparison with pre-perestroika generation. Moreover, a significant growth was revealed in the group of qualities providing “wide social contacts”.

**Conclusion.**

1. The sample of post-perestroika youth exceed the compared group of perestroika generation in respect of all five groups of personal qualities.

2. In spite of the general growth of adaptive capabilities, the “price” for it (obvious growth of emotional tension) is quite high (high values of Factors O and Q4).

3. The development of intellectual capabilities and volitional regulation of activity are largely compensated by a high level of neuro-psychic tension.

4. The stabilization in the society development essentially enhances the adaptive potential of the personality. Being involved in the transformation of society, people win the
experience of developing their qualities in the remote perspective. However, they appear to be relatively worse adjusted to current everyday life.

References


